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ABSTRACT

These six issues of a periodical intended for teachers and tutors of adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students offer articles and features including the following: readers' comments and questions; in-class map practice ideas; songs for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learning; suggested films to show in class; conversation activities; dictation activities; crossword puzzles; how to create student presentations; working with ESL seniors; book reviews; the plight of refugees; how email can encourage student outings; discussion activities, ESL driving instruction; ESL games (question and answer cards for oral practice); spoken language comprehension; visual cues for pronunciation; telling stories with sound effects; grammar activities; clip art for teacher-made lessons; teaching ESL in English only; introducing a new unit; vocabulary activities; holiday activities; speaking activities; and including review in lessons. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (SM)

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Hands-On English: A Periodical for Teachers and Tutors of Adult English as a Second Language, 2002-2003

Anna Silliman, Editor

Hands-On English v12 n1-6 May/Jun 2002-Mar/Apr 2003

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Volume 12, Number 1 May/June 2002

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Exchange of views on book reviews

As we begin our dozenth year of this publication, we are amazed at how much response we're hearing from busy teachers who have contacted us either to give feedback on activities they've tried or to share ideas with our readers. Thank you! This publication is really put together with help from *dozens* of you and that's what makes it so unique.

Help us pick books

Now we'd like to ask for more help. We are planning to include more book reviews in *Hands-on English* from now on—in this issue, for example, we have two reviews on page 14. In order to select titles for review that are really useful, we'd like to hear from you what materials you and your students really like. What materials would you want other teachers to know about, and why? If you have comments to pass along about these materials, we'd love to hear from you.

In addition, we do sometimes receive new books here in the office from publishers. We can analyze these and present them in a review for you if they look useful, but we think it would be much *more* interesting to get feedback from teachers who have tried these materials out with their students. Would you be interested helping with this project by serving on a 'review committee'? If we have a book here that matches the interests and level of your students, would you be willing to try it out and give us some feedback?

If you think you'd like to be a reviewer, please contact the editor and we'll see what we can work out. Thank you!

In this issue

We've heard numerous times that our readers are looking for work-related materials, so we hope that you'll find the two activities in this issue on paychecks helpful. Students need to know what all those little numbers are and what those mysterious deductions are, in order to make sure they are being paid correctly and that they are being credited correctly for Social Security, etc. Also, the better they understand these issues, the easier it will be for them to make good decisions when they apply for jobs.

The listening activity, "How much is my paycheck," on pages 6 and 7 should be kind of fun, if you take it slowly enough that the students can follow along. We hope they will enjoy solving the puzzles presented there. The crossword, "About your paycheck" on pages 8 and 9, will provide your students with more practice and review of the same vocabulary.

Dearest Abbie

Once again our colleague Abbie Tom shares her thoughts on the dilemma of one of our readers—this time, about teaching older students. We hope you'll find her ideas helpful and interesting. Do you have a question for *Dear Abbie*? If so, send it along to us and we'll forward it to her. She is waiting with fingers poised over the keyboard for next issue's question!

We hope that you and your students have a lovely spring. We'll see you again in the summer issue! —the Editor.

FL 801583

Hands-on English

Volume 12, Number 1
May/June 2002

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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12-1

Letters

. . .& cards,
emails,
calls,
rumors,
etc.

New subscriber not alone

"My first HOE newsletter has arrived and I am so happy. I was able to use 3 of the suggested activities immediately, over three classes. We used the map suggestions, the 'turn off the TV' dictation, and the opposites crossword. I have been feeling so alone and now I feel connected to other ESL teachers. Thank you."—**Marcia Framsted** (via email)

Kudos for colleagues

"I'm always *so* impressed with the creativity and dedication of teaching colleagues and their generosity in writing up their great ideas and lessons." —**Margaret Bertucco**, Oak Park, Illinois

Editor's note: You're right—it's that generous spirit that makes this such a wonderful field to participate in.

Some pennies for your thoughts. . .

'TV Turnoff' turns on students

"Thanks a million to *Hands-on-English* for the material on TV-Turnoff Week. I used it for my scheduled teacher observation lesson. The students (intermediate level, multiethnic) generated a lively conversation about the benefits and disadvantages of TV for adults and children that was endless. Everybody had something to say about watching TV. In addition to the dictation provided in HOE, I followed up with a writing assignment for the next lesson. Students had to choose one subject to comment on, such as: Compare TV in your country to TV in the U.S. Which do you like better? Is TV good or bad for children? Why? What are your favorite TV shows? Why?

"I was amazed at the TV shows my students prefer: Jerry Springer, Oprah, I Love Lucy, News, and cartoons for the children.

"In addition, the administrative observer loved the lesson. . .Thanks again for providing student-centered, reality based material for 'turning on' students to learning English." —**Sharon Borakove**, loyal HOE subscriber, Brooklyn, New York.

Value of HOE

"I find your issues interesting, lively and useful—worth every penny."

—Carol Weinstein, New York, NY

Editor's note: Thank you. We hope you'll ***still*** *feel that way this fall. Unfortunately we will have to raise our subscription prices then due to postage increases. At the same time though, we are expanding each issue to 20 pages, so there will be more great stuff coming your way. (Shh...don't tell anybody—it's a surprise!)*

Reader looking for true stories

"I enjoy your newsletter. In your old editions, do you have some other true stories like the reading activity entitled "Voting Rights"? [Vol. 10, No. 3, September/October 2000.]

—**Lina Crocker**, Lexington, Kentucky

Editor's note: Lina is referring to a story about an elderly friend of ours and her childhood memory of the day voting rights for women was passed in the U.S. We re-told the story in simple language with pictures, for beginners.

That activity was unique in its connection to a real life event. We would love to produce more stories like this, if readers can send us ideas or share stories that we can use and re-tell. Have you, or a relative, or a student, ever witnessed a historic event? We'd love to hear from you, thanks!

Correction: publisher info

In our last issue, we printed an article on where to find ESL books and resources. We made one goof on page 10. The correct web address for **New Readers Press** is: <www.newreaderspress.com> Please make a note on your copy, thanks!

—Editor.

Hints & tips

In-class map practice

***Marilyn Kwitkin** sends us this marvelous response to the map activities we printed in our last issue:*

"When I teach maps & directions to a low level class, it is important to teach the prepositions of location. i give each student a card with the name of a common store or business (bank, gas station, hospital, school, park, etc.) on it. I move the student chairs into 2 rows , facing each other, with a few chairs perpendicular to the rows, trying to simulate a city block with corners.

"The students are seated and display their cards. I give clues to have the students ID the location that I am looking for. For example: I got paid today and I need to cash my check (bank); It is a nice day and I want to play soccer (park); I am not feeling well (doctor or clinic or hospital); etc.

"After the students agree on the place needed, I ask 'Where is the ....?' or 'Where is it?' The student with the proper location must respond, giving the location, using 3 indicators, such as:

ON Main Street
NEXT TO the ....
BETWEEN _______ and ___________.
AROUND THE CORNER FROM _________.
ACROSS FROM _________________.

"The students really enjoy the activity. It certainly is a change of pace and the situations create a sense of reality to saying the location."

Songs for ESL?

Willi Jean Holbron contacted us to ask where she can get songs for the ESL classroom. She plans to use these in part to focus on pronunciation. We had only one text to recommend, plus some websites for finding song lyrics and other teaching ideas.

The text/workbook/tape series that we like is *Sing It! Learn English through Song* by Millie Grenough (McGraw Hill/Contemporary). We reviewed this six-level series in Vol. 4, No. 5 of *Hands-on English* (January/February 1995). This material is very nicely thought out and could be used for sing-alongs as well as for vocabulary, grammar writing and cultural lessons.

To explore other possibilities on the internet, use Dave's ESL cafe as a starting point; go to <www.eslcafe.com> and find the 'Web Guide'. From there, select 'Music' where you'll find over a dozen links to music resources.

For example, one site listed there is <www.lyrics.com> which allows you to search for any song by artist. So if you were looking for the words to *Born in the USA*, you'd look under "S" for Bruce Springsteen.

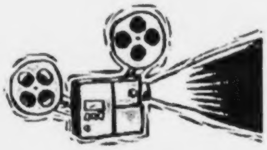
Another site, called "E.S.L. through Music", is hosted by Dr. Suzanne Medina of California State University, Dominguez Hills. This includes teacher-submitted lesson plans and articles on using music for education. See <www.geocities.com/ESLMusic/>.

We'd love to hear from our readers with other ideas, tips, resources and experiences!

Film tips needed

Mary McKenna-Jaeger contacted us to say she is compiling a list of movies that might be appropriate for all levels of ESL. The ones she's had success with so far are humorous, very visual and use little colloquial English. Here's her list:

The Bear
The Great Panda Adventure
Home Alone 1 & 2
Mr. Bean
Cool Runnings
Baby's Day Out
Monkey Trouble
Fire on Ice



Can you add to this list? *Hands-on English* has had articles about two movies in past issues. One was a "Mr. Mom" lesson [Vol. 4, No. 5, Jan/Feb 1995] and the other was a lesson on the silent French film, "The Red Balloon" [Vol. 7, No. 6, March/April 1998].

We also like Charlie Chaplin films for this purpose. Chaplin is familiar to many students, is universal, and his films provoke interesting discussion and commentary. If your tape has a music soundtrack, you can turn this off so that students can discuss the film while it's running. Any more ideas?

Do you have an activity or technique that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? ESL teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas and inspiration. We'd love to have your input. Thanks!!

Conversation activity:
"Not today; maybe another time."

All levels of students can benefit from this kind of practice.

How to say no

Are your students comfortable saying no? Do they have strategies for politely turning down an offer or indicating lack of interest? Here is an activity to give them a chance to practice this.

First, give the students an example and ask them to brainstorm various ways to say no. Explain that another teacher asked you to join her for lunch, but you don't want to go (maybe you are tired, or you don't feel like talking). What can you say that is friendly and polite, but negative?

Collect potential responses and write them in two categories on the board; direct and diplomatic. Add any suggestions to the list that you feel the students might be able to use. Have the students practice saying these.

Next, hand out the role cards. Explain that when another student asks you something, you have to find a way to say no. Then let the students work in pairs, switching partners when they are finished.

As a wrap-up exercise, some students might volunteer to present their example to the rest of the class. Further discussion might cover situations the students have found themselves in, such as receiving telephone solicitations.

Direct:	**Diplomatic:**
No.	Not today.
No, thanks.	Maybe later.
No, I can't.	I'll think about it.
	I'm busy.
	I'd rather not.

Can I borrow your TV?	Can you tell me the answers on this test?	Do you want a cigarette?
Can you help me with my homework?	Can your daughter go shopping with me and my kids?	Do you want to come to a party with me?
Do you want to drink beer with me and my friends?	Would you like to buy a used car from my brother?	Can I have your phone number?
Do you like loud music?	Can you lend me some money?	Would you like to buy some candy? It's for our children's school.

Dictation:

How much is my paycheck?

Here's a different kind of dictation—the students listen to the story and try to fill in the correct information on a blank pay stub. They will practice some math skills in doing this exercise. This should also help them to get familiar with some of the complex vocabulary on pay issues. Most of all, we hope it will encourage them to take a close look at their own paychecks and ask questions about anything they don't understand.

Preparation

You'll need some calculators for the students to use. Make copies of the blank pay stub on the next page. Be sure to bring extras, in case students want to work through the exercise again, or try it with variations.

Read the story, pausing to help the students find the correct place to write each piece of information. Have the students work out the total and write this on the paystub. You can also have them estimate the annual amounts for this example (see suggested questions, below).

Students who have jobs may wish to ask further questions, as many of them will have paystubs that look different or deductions not mentioned here. ☚

One of our readers, Pauline Cahalan in Minnesota, left us a phone message with the question, how to help students understand paychecks? Here's what we came up with—on this page a listening and calculating exercise, and on page 8 a multi-level puzzle for more practice with the vocabulary. We hope your students will find this useful and informative!

My name is Robert Reich. My Social Security number is 123-45-6789. I work for the XYZ Company. I get a paycheck every two weeks. My boss pays me $10 an hour.

From May 1st through May 15, I worked 85 hours. The first 80 hours was for regular pay. The other 5 hours was overtime, so I get $15 an hour for that. So, my total wages was 80 hours times $10, plus 5 hours times $15. Please help me to figure out my total wages.

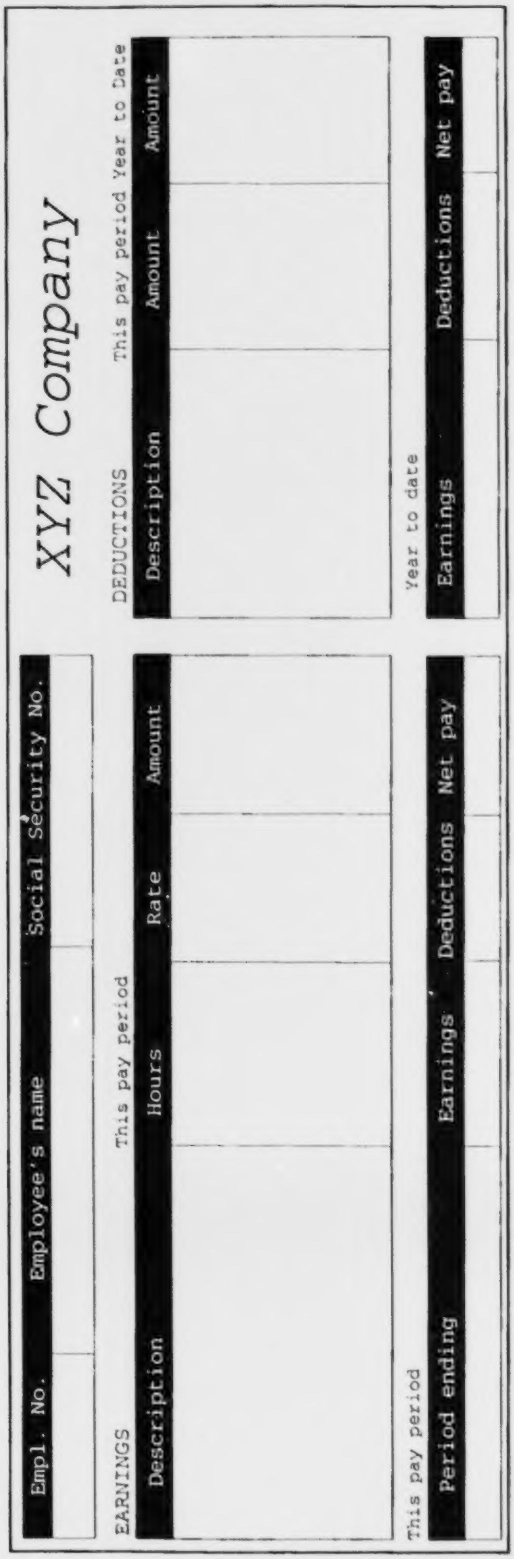
There are some deductions on my paycheck. First, 6% of my wages is withholding for Federal income tax. Two percent is withholding for State income tax. (Everybody's tax withholding is different—it depends on how many children you have and how much you earn.) At the end of the year, I hope I will get a tax refund.

Next, 7.65% of my wages is deducted for Social Security and Medicare. (Together, this is called F.I.C.A. taxes.) When I am old enough to retire, I will get this money back, with extra that my employer pays.

My employer doesn't have health insurance, so I don't have a deduction for that. Please help me to figure out my paycheck. How much will my take-home pay be? Thank you!

Discussion

1. If Robert got a $2 per hour raise, how much would this paycheck be?
2. How many weeks do you think Robert will work this year? What do you think his total wages will be for the year?
3. How much money will Robert pay to Social Security this year? What happens to this money?
4. How much of Robert's wages will go to Federal income tax this year? What happens to this money?



XYZ Company

Empl. No.	Employee's name	Social Security No.

EARNINGS This pay period

Description	Hours	Rate	Amount

DEDUCTIONS This pay period Year to Date

Description	Amount	Amount

This pay period

Period ending	Earnings	Deductions	Net pay

Year to date

Earnings	Deductions	Net pay

Here is Robert's pay stub. Listen to his story and write the information on the stub.

Some teaching notes

Notice that the story does not give all of the information necessary to fill in every space on the form. For example, we don't know Robert's *year-to-date* earnings. To make sure the students understand what this is, you can use a calendar to show them the time period and invent a number. Or, the students can do a calculation of this amount based on how many hours he may have worked from January through April. Other issues of interest: *holiday pay, vacation pay, back pay, sick time*.

What should Robert do to make sure his paycheck is correct? Ask students to provide some advice. This might include:

- Check the spelling of your name and check the social security number. It should be exactly the same as on your Social Security card.
- Check the number of hours you worked to make sure this is correct.
- Check the deductions to see if they are correct. If you don't understand something, ask your employer.
- Keep all of your pay stubs.

Other questions for discussion

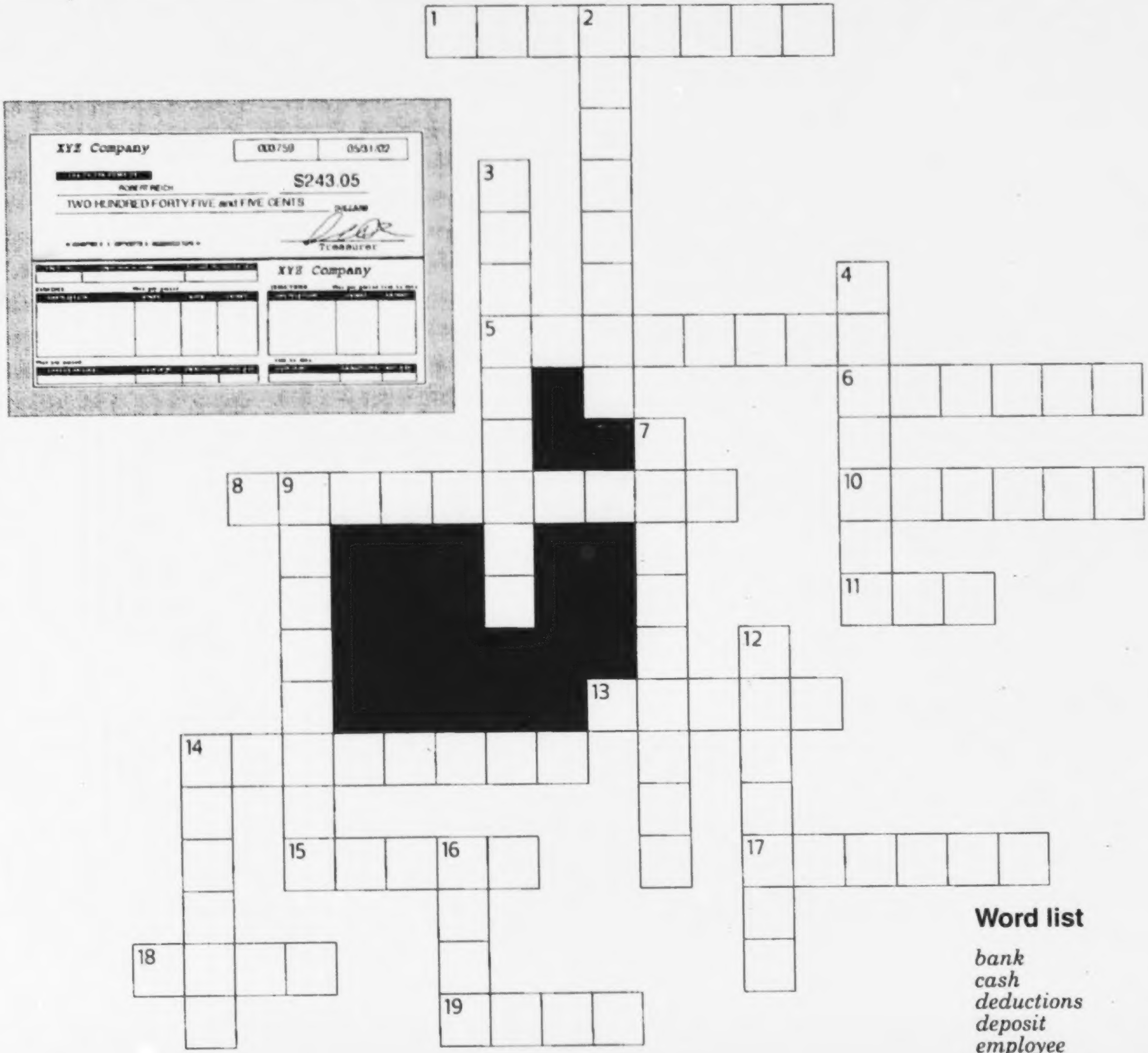
Here are some other questions that might come up:

How do you know how much money is in your Social Security account? Each year you contribute 6.2% of your earnings, and your employer contributes the same amount for you. You can add up all of the wages on your pay stubs, take 6.2% of the total, double it and that is how much went into your account. At the end of the year (usually in January) your employer will send you a report about this, called a W2 form. Also, once a year you should receive a letter from the Social Security Administration with information about your account. (New arrivals may not receive this until the second year they've been employed.)

How do you know how much income tax you have already paid? Again, you can look at each pay stub for the year and add up the amounts under 'Federal income tax withholding.' At the end of the year you'll receive a W2 form from your employer that shows how much you earned all year and how much tax you paid. (These numbers should be the same as the totals from your pay stubs.) After you figure out your taxes for the year, you might find out that you have paid too much in taxes already. Then you will get a refund check.

How do you know how many withholding allowances to claim on the W4 form? The answer to this question falls into the category of tax advice, so you cannot help your students with this. Instead, refer them to a qualified source of tax information. See our March/April 2001 (Vol. 10, No. 6) issue on taxes for some ideas on resources.

Crossword puzzle:
About your paycheck



XYZ Company

000750 05/31/02

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TWO HUNDRED FORTY FIVE and FIVE CENTS DOLLARS

Treasurer

XYZ Company

Word list

bank
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deposit
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employer
federal
income tax
insurance
overtime
paycheck
payday
period
raise
retire
social
stub
take-home
tax
wages

Note to instructors:

If this vocabulary is difficult for your students, it might be a good idea to do the 'dictation' exercise on pages 6–7 first. Then use this puzzle for review.

You can reassure your students that paychecks and tax issues are difficult also for native speakers to understand. Take plenty of time to make these concepts clear. Your students need to be well informed on these issues.

Level A

Across clues

1. I earned $300, but my deductions were $56.95. So, my __________ pay is only $243.05.
5. In one week, if you work more than 40 hours, the extra hours are called ______ .
6. Some people get paid every week. Some people get paid every two weeks. This time is called your pay _______ .
8. Some of your pay goes to income tax. Some goes to Social Security. Some goes to Medicare. These are subtracted from your pay. They are called ____________.
10. Every employee must have a _________ Security number.
11. With every paycheck, you pay some Federal and State income _________. At the end of the year, you might get some of this money back.
13. The number of hours you worked, times the amount your boss pays you per hour, equals your total __________.
14. Usually, every two weeks your boss gives you a ____________.
15. I used to get $8 an hour. Now I get $9 an hour, because last month I got a _______.
17. When you are 66 years old, you can _______. Then you can receive Social Security payments every month.
18. You can take your paycheck to the bank. Sign your name on the back. They will give you the ___________.
19. On payday, you can cash your check or deposit it in a ________ account.

Down clues

2. I work for this company 40 hours per week. I am a full-time ______________.
3. Some money for Federal and State ____________________ is deducted from your paycheck.
4. You can put your paycheck into your bank account. This called a ______________.
7. "Do you get have benefits at your job?" "Yes, we have health ___________."
9. "Who is your ___________?" "I work for the XYZ Company."
12. ___________ income tax is the tax that goes to the U.S. government.
14. On _____________, your boss gives you your paycheck.
16. Your paycheck has two parts; the check and the _________. You give the check to the bank and keep the other part.

Level B

Across clues

1. The amount of your paycheck is your ___________ pay. The rest of your earnings go to taxes and other deductions.
5. If you work ____________, you get more pay per hour.
6. This paycheck is for the pay ________ of May 1st through May 15th.
8. Your earnings, minus your ______________, equals your take-home pay.
10. One of the deductions on your paycheck is for _______ Security and Medicare. This is called F.I.C.A. taxes.
11. Your paycheck will have deductions for Federal and State income _________.
13. "__________" means your total earnings before deductions.
14. Look at your ___________ carefully to make sure there are no mistakes.
15. After you work here for six months, you will get a 50¢ per hour __________ .
17. I can _______ from work in 29 years.
18. "Can I borrow $20?" "Sure, but I have to ______ my paycheck first."
19. If you have an account at this _______, you can cash your check here.

Down clues

2. "_______" is another word for *worker*.
3. Everybody has to pay _______________ at the end of the year.
4. Your employer can send your paycheck to your bank account for you. This is called 'direct _________.'
7. If you have health _________ you usually have to pay a fee every month.
9. The person or the company you work for is your ________________.
12. ___________ and State income tax are both deducted from your paycheck.
14. I don't have any money, so I will pay the rent after __________.
16. Your pay ______ has information about the hours and deductions for this pay period.

From the field:
"How to do it" presentations

My classes have become much more project oriented in recent years. I have found that even very low functioning students get excited when they can tell the class about something they know well. This was especially true of this 'How to' project.

February was "How to" month

To introduce our 'How to' month, I first demonstrated how to make cupcakes. of course, we ate them at the end of the day. Then I gave each student a packet explaining the project they would do, and giving guidelines: I included samples of 'How to' lessons taken from *English for Everyday Activities* (by Lawrence J. Zwier, New Readers Press, ISBN 1-56420-222-4). I encouraged students to choose a topic they knew very well. I also encouraged them to work in a group.

Starting the process

In the packet was a sign-up sheet allowing the student to indicate the topic, the presentation date of the student's choice, and names of the students in the group. All this was done about three weeks before the presentations were to begin, so students had much time to prepare.

Students worked numerous hours outside of class time so they could gather the materials they needed to make a first-rate presentation.

After all presentations were completed, we celebrated with a handmade laminated bookmark for each student. The bookmark had a picture of the student doing the presentation. The title of the presentation and the date also appeared on the bookmark.

Feedback was incredibly positive. Everyone participated in a presentation, and topics were incredibly creative and were presented in an interesting manner. Some student topics were:

- Ethnic food
- Piñata
- Origami
- Gift boxes
- Games
- Tango, salsa
- Travel
- Cross stitch
- Celebrating the New Year
- Moscow subway
- Celebrating Ramadan
- Flower arranging
- Cutting hair

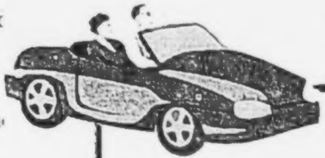
. . .and how to make a quilt

From these presentations emerged an interest in quilting. So Ewa, who is the aide in the classroom, began teaching quilting. Students designed, cut, sewed and assembled a 16-block quilt in one class and a 30-block quilt in the second class. Recently, we celebrated the completion and hanging of the smaller quilt, with a gift to Ewa for all her hard work.

—by ***Sandra Kay Bender****, ESL Teacher at Monroe County Community School Corporation, Adult Education in Bloomington, Indiana.*

(Sandra was an awardee in our 2001 Hands-on English Minigrants program)

Handouts for students included a detailed sign-up sheet and some guidelines for their presentations.



Guidelines:

◆ Your presentation should take no more then 5 minutes per person in a group. If you are the only person in your group, you may take 5-15 minutes.

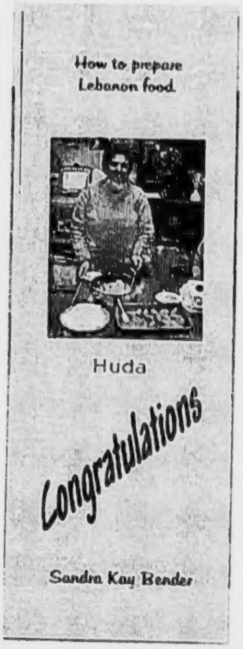
◆You may use notes, but please **don't read** your entire presentation. Talk to the class: don't read to the class.

◆You may use transparencies, pictures, books, or the real things! If you use a video,the video should be no more than 5 minutes. Tell Sandy if you need any equipment.

◆Students from the **same** or **different** countries may present together. No more than 3 people in a group.

◆I will ask you to sign on the calendar the date **between February 4 and March 8** that you will present.

Presentations, cont'd. . .



How to prepare Lebanon food.

Huda

Congratulations

Sandra Kay Bender

Each student was awarded a custom-made, laminated bookmark as a memento of their presentation.

*This project demonstrates the very effective use of a digital camera—first to record the students' presentations, then to make a classroom display of all the projects, then to provide individual students with a souvenir. This technology makes it easy to share materials in many ways. . . including sharing with **Hands-on English** and all of our readers!*

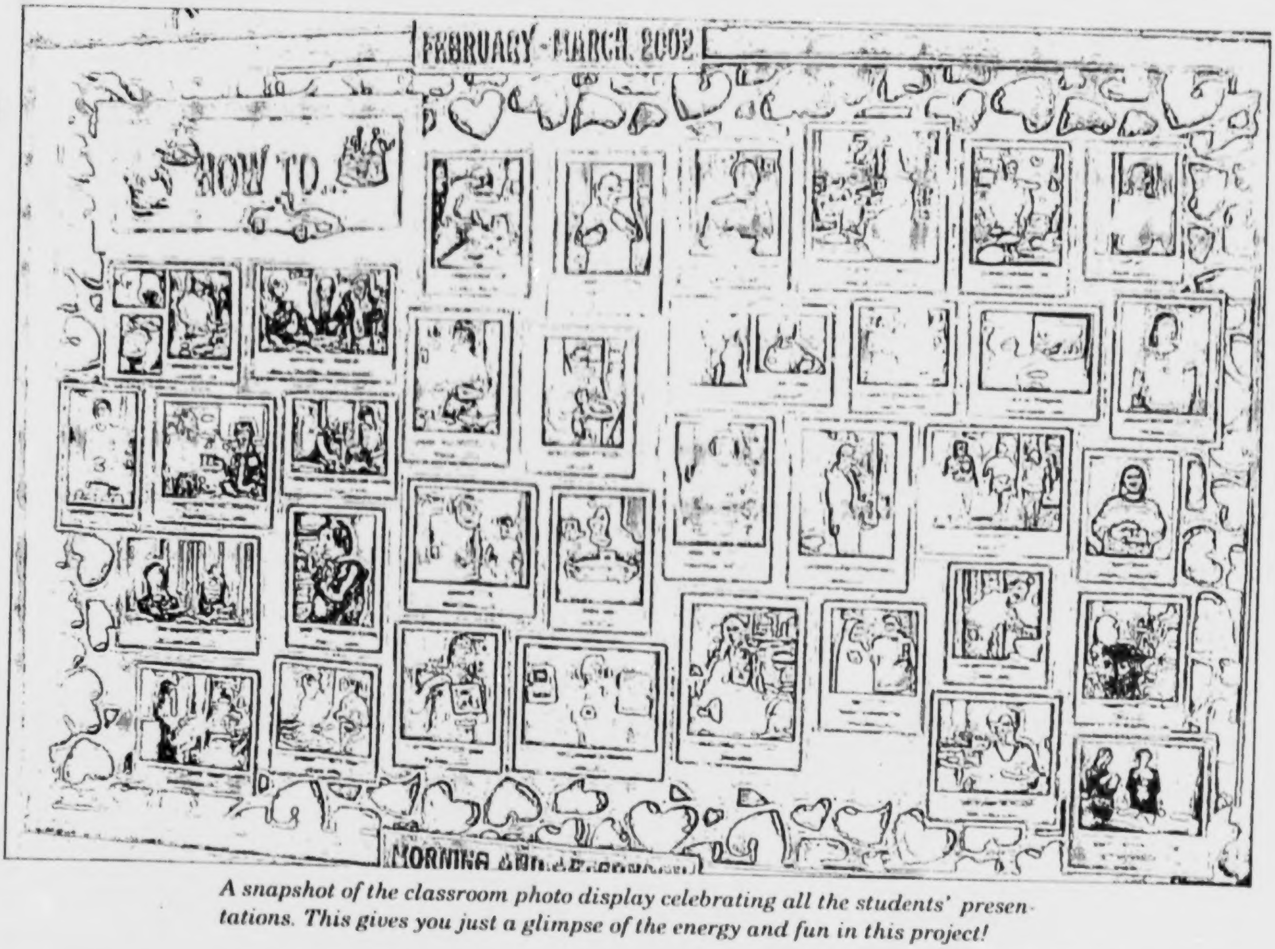
Why it works

Students can gain a lot from giving a presentation! What they get is:

- Increased self-confidence from completing a challenging task successfully;
- Recognition and understanding from the other students;
- Practice organizing a topic within a given format;
- Practice speaking English in a formal setting.

Students also gain a lot by listening to the other students' presentations. They get:

- Increased understanding of their classmates;
- A stronger sense of community in the classroom;
- Practice in listening to a speaker and asking questions;
- Increased knowledge of the subjects or cultural content;
- Ideas for their own presentations.



A snapshot of the classroom photo display celebrating all the students' presentations. This gives you just a glimpse of the energy and fun in this project!

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Dear Abbie:
Working with ESL seniors

Dear Abbie,

I'm *trying* to teach ESL to older Chinese adults with limited English literacy skills. I do not speak Chinese. Sometimes I have an interpreter in the room. Do you have any suggestions?

—Donald Korsun
Chinese school, Bowery Residents' Committee, New York, NY.

Dear Donald,

I'm always impressed by elderly students who challenge themselves to learn English. Often they have to overcome transportation problems or physical problems such as hearing loss, limited vision and arthritis. Frequently they feel less capable than younger people and have to overcome discouragement as well.

In working with older students, I find that they generally appreciate a more leisurely pace. It may take them longer to process new concepts or unfamiliar activities. They may be less interested in activities that involve a lot of movement. It's especially important to give them space to tell their own stories.

Where to start

I think the first step toward a solution is to concentrate on one theme at a time and carry it over from one lesson to the next. Themes might include personal information, family, daily activities, food, clothing, health and housing. If you work in small steps on the same theme, you won't need a translator. Picture dictionaries or picture cards are very useful for conveying meaning using only English. Keep the pictures simple, though, so the meaning is clear. Don't worry about grammar explanations. Instead, give the students models of correct forms. And keep it simple!!

Simple activities are more difficult than we imagine for English learners. By using simple activities and reusing them in various themes, you make the lessons more comprehensible. Think about what students really need to know at this point in their language learning. Don't rush. It takes a long time to learn a new language. Keep coming back to what you've already done. Work on the same content in different ways: hearing, saying, reading, writing.

Some classroom tips

I always believe it's important to encourage communication in your classes. Talk to your students in English, using language they can understand. Use language in context. Let's say you start with personal information. Start with "What's your name?" and "My name is ____." Then work on spelling names out loud and writing them down so that they work on saying and hearing letters in a context rather than just reciting them. They can spell them to each other and to you. Don't forget about first name/ last name (family name), a problem for Chinese speakers.

Personal information also provides a context for practicing numbers (what's your telephone number? Your address? Your age? Your birthday?). You can dictate names, addresses and phone numbers to the students and have them dictate them to each other. You might have them fill in a simple form. You can also have them tell you information which you can write on the board or on a piece of paper in the form of a story, like this:

Chen's Story

My name is Chen. I am 75 years old. I live at 333 N. 6th Street. My phone number is 555-3880. My birthday is April 12.

This provides material which the students can easily read. Alternatively, if your students are able, they can write their own stories based on a model you provide about yourself. They can read them to each other in class and to their families when they go home.

Family is a good theme to go to next because it is not difficult to convey meanings, everybody finds it interesting and it gives you a chance to review numbers and letters from the previous theme. Picture dictionaries usually have simple family tree pictures or you can draw your own.

—by **Abbie Tom**, ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

Abbie Tom is a veteran teacher who has published a number of books and has given teacher training workshops. We are pleased to get her teaching advice in response to your questions.

Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at ***Hands-on English*** *and we will pass these along to her. Thank you!*

Great stuff in HOE's back issues!

Hands-on English has all of our back issues available (some of the older ones as reprints). That's nearly 11 years of useful teaching materials! You can order these for $5 each; order 10 or more and get them for $4 each. See a detailed description of all the back issues on our website at:
www.handsonenglish.com/backissues.html

You can order online, by mail, or call us toll free at 1-800- 375-4263. —*H.O.E.*

Real Basics; A Beginning ESL Text for Immigrants by S.E. Treadgold. (2000 New Leaf ESL Materials) A clear introduction to the patterns, concepts and vocabulary beginning level immigrants will need to navigate in their new language and culture. ISBN 0-96637-05-2-X. $15. The *Teacher's Companion* has reproducible games, scrambled sentences, pictures and cards.

Pro Lingua Associates

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Seniors, cont'd. . .

Students enjoy sharing information about their families and may want to bring family pictures. They can read and write short stories about families. I usually write a short one about my family as an example (see left).

Abbie's own story for the students:

My family

I have two sons. My older son's name is Michael. He is 34 years old. He lives in California. His birthday is June 4. My younger son's name is Jason. He is 31. He lives in Kansas. His birthday is April 20.

Rather than go into detail on each theme, let me just suggest some kinds of activities that work well with older beginners and can be adapted to most themes:

Pictures: Have everyone point to (or hold up) picture when you say the name ("sweater"); say the name when you point to a picture; practice the same thing in pairs. Point to the picture when you show the name on a flash card. Organize picture cards in categories (like/ don't like, wear/ don't wear).

Realia: Bring real things to class. For example, an envelope addressed to you can be used to model address and return address. A big round clock helps students practice telling time.

Dictation: Staying within a theme, read and have the students write names, addresses, phone numbers, prices (a red sweater-- $24; a dozen eggs -- $1.23). You can give also students short lists of items to dictate to each other.

Copying: Most beginners learn writing initially by copying down words and sentences. The important thing is that they not just copy meaningless words. For example, when students label a picture of clothing or body parts based on the teacher's model, they are completing a meaningful activity, not just making a list. Copying a story the teacher writes on the board about the student or his classmate is also meaningful.

Language experience: Students tell you about an event, a story, their lives. You write it down; they use it as reading material. Note: some people suggest that you leave the students' language uncorrected. I prefer to make corrections as I write (for example, *She like > She likes*).

Books

There are a lot of good materials written for teaching adult beginners. You don't need to invent everything yourself! Here are some titles that provide good exercises for students just starting out with literacy skills:

First Class Reader! Integrated Skills Lessons for Beginners by Sharron Bassano (Alta Book Center Publishers, ISBN 1-882483-29-4). Uses pictures to introduce stories about daily life.

The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary (*red cover*) by Margot Gramer (Oxford University Press ISBN 0-19-434468-1) . Easy for beginners to use; available also in bilingual versions.

Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program by Garnet Templin-Imel with Shirley Brod (ISBN 0-19-434573-4). Designed to be used with the above dictionary. This is a bit expensive but excellent.

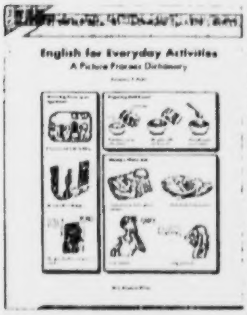
First Words in English by Linda Mrowicki (Linmore Publishing, ISBN 0-916591-21-2). Teacher's manual and resource book are very helpful; reasonably priced.

Starting to Read by Linda Mrowicki (Linmore Publishing, ISBN 0-016591-11-5). The next step after *First Words*, above.

Longman ESL Literacy by Yvonne Wong Nishio (Longman, ISBN 0-201-35182-X). Very clear and accessible. You also need the somewhat expensive but excellent teacher resource book.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials



English for Everyday Activities; A Picture Process Dictionary, Basic Edition *by Lawrence J. Zwier, adapted by Janet Podnecky (2002 New Readers Press). ISBN 1-56420-284-4. A workbook, teacher's guide and cassette tape are also available.*

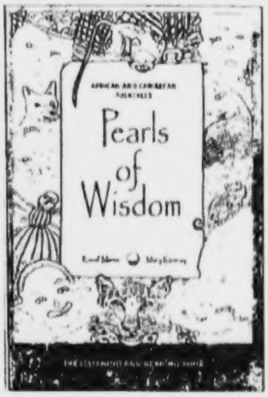
We've been hearing for some time that teachers are using this book for introducing a wide range of activities to their students. For example, Sandra Kay Bender shows sequences from the book to get her students started on their "How to do it" presentations (see page 10 of this issue). The new, lower level 'Basic' edition makes this illustrated vocabulary book much more useful for beginners and high beginners than the previous higher-level version.

Each entry in the book is a picture sequence of six to ten drawings, clearly showing details of processes such as making tea, taking a bus, going to a movie, paying by credit card, etc. Each picture is described with a caption—for this edition, a simple present tense sentence ("Tom signs the payment slip").

Picture sequences are always useful in ESL teaching, and if you are an experienced teacher, you probably can think of numerous good ways to put these to work. For example, listening activities—you provide the pictures without captions, the students put these in the correct sequence while you read the story. Other possibilities include re-telling (students hear the story a couple of times, then retell it using the pictures as a guide), matching (students match the written caption with the correct picture), and dictation (students listen and write the caption under each picture).You could also create a grammar exercise (re-write the story in the past tense, form questions, etc.).

Another good use for this book of course is for reference and self-study. Because the pictures are of action sequences, the vocabulary in this book is much more verb-oriented than other picture references and so it is a useful complement to your teaching arsenal.

Pearls of Wisdom; African and Caribbean Folktales *by Raouf Mama and Mary Romney (2001 Pro Lingua Associates). ISBN 0-86647-134-0. A set of cassette tapes and an Integrated Language Skills Workbook are also available.*



Stories are certainly the most interesting teaching material, and you can never have too many of them at your disposal. For intermediate through advanced level students, this collection, along with the workbook materials and cassettes, makes a beautiful addition to your story repertoire.

Hands-on English has mentioned other folktales books in previous issues. What sets this one apart? The stories are powerful. Like Aesop's fables, they teach a lesson but more profound and complex ones than in other tales. The stories are not remotely childlike; they raise questions as much as they answer them. In a nutshell, they provide food for thought and learning.

The excellent workbook expands vocabulary learning but more importantly draws out discussion of the meaning of the story. Students explore the moral of the story, discuss the themes found there (trust, betrayal, deception) and discuss relevant proverbs ("Do unto others..."). A set of interesting questions encourages students to relate the themes of the story to their personal experience ("Have you ever been robbed or deceived by someone?"), and to the broader contexts of groups and cultures ("Do you know of long-time conflicts between groups?"). As a final step, students discuss symbols and metaphors related to the story.

The wisdom of the stories will be of universal interest and will provide a chance for people of all cultures to share ideas. At the same time, it is wonderful that they bring a flavor of the African diaspora to us and to our students.

Usually the cassette tape is the part you can do without if you are trying to save money, but in this case we highly recommend the tapes. The beautiful and dramatic recording of the tales will add a new dimension to your lessons.

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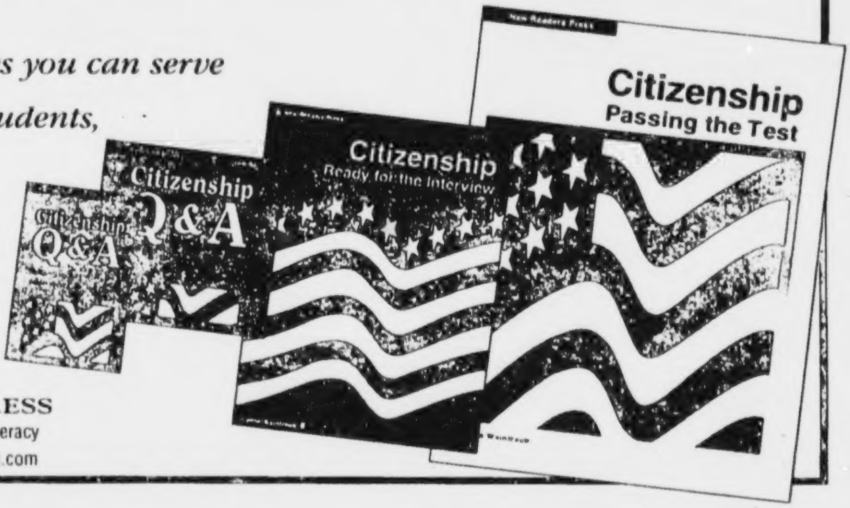
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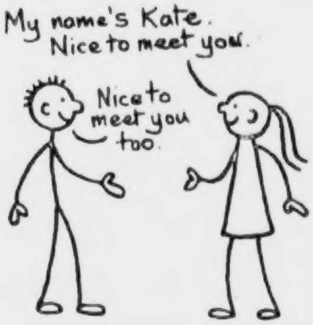
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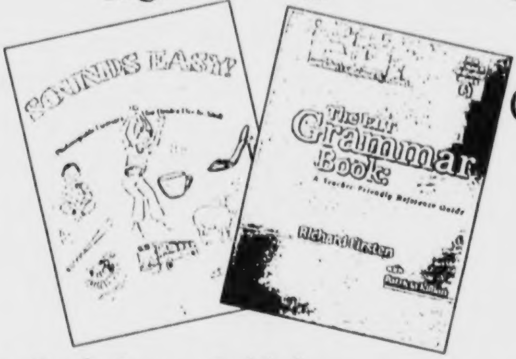

The ELT Grammar Book:
A Teacher-Friendly Reference Guide
Richard Firsten
with Patricia Killian
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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Warm spring and summer weather gives everybody a chance to get out and around more. You can exploit this trend with lessons that involve students in the community in some way. How about a **scavenger hunt** in your city or neighborhood? Read a report about one such project in Vol. 7, No. 4 (Nov/Dec 1997), and another in Vol. 11, No. 3 (Sept/Oct 2001). Find a conversation activity that gets students talking about their **neighborhoods** in Vol. 9, No. 6 (Mar/April 2000). And a multi-level crossword on **taking care of business** can be found in Vol. 8, No. 3 (Sept/Oct 1998). Other good ideas for out-of-class learning experiences can be found in *A to Zany, Community Activities for Students of English* by Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz (Michigan U. Press 0-472-08501-8). We reviewed this book in Vol. 9, No. 1 (May/June 1999).

Will you be saying goodbye to students for the summer? Look at our conversation activity about **discussing upcoming plans**: "Have a nice trip!" in Vol. 8, No. 4.

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Volume 12, Number 2 July/August 2002

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Plight of refugees

If you haven't done so already, now is a good time to write to your U.S. member of Congress, your Senators and the President to urge them to get the Refugee program back on track. Since September 11, thousands of refugees who would have been admitted here already have had to remain in refugee camps, sometimes in dangerous and unhealthy conditions. This includes people who qualify for family reunification.

While the temporary disruption and security complications are understandable, it is unacceptable that the U.S. should lapse in this vital responsibility. Support in the U.S. for refugees is and always has been bipartisan; this isn't a political issue. We need to act now—lives are at stake.

If you'd like to find out more, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) has a good website at <www.refugees.org>. Another organization that advocates for refugees is the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). We found their website especially helpful. You'll see an article entitled "Save the U.S. Refugee Program!" with a clear description of the problem, sample letters to elected officials, resources for a campaign on behalf of refugees, and useful links. Go to <www.lirs.org>.

Join the team?

You may be aware that *Hands-on English* has an enthusiastic group of advisors to help us brainstorm and stay on track with our mission. We would welcome additional members of this advisory team! So, if you like giving advice, consider yourself an 'idea person' and would like to contribute toward making HOE even better, please contact the editor and inquire about the Advisory Board. We look forward to your input.

What's in this issue

Good news, bad news—there's a rate hike coming in our subscription prices, BUT we're expanding at the same time. (See page 3 for more details.)

There may be a drought, but the ideas are still flowing! Our 'Dear Abbie' has once again responded to a reader's question, this time about preparing students to take the driver's test and drive a car. She shares some of her lessons, including several ready-to-use activities. Do you have a question for *Dear Abbie*? If so, send it along to us and we'll forward it to her.

A reading and dictation activity "Going to the DMV" follows up on the driving theme with a true story for your students' enjoyment. Our crossword puzzles in this issue are about geography—one about capital cities and their countries; the other is a 'mirror' puzzle that asks about countries and their capital cities. Your students may need to refer to an atlas to find the answers.

We also bring you a book review, more tips on suitable movies for ESL, and a nifty way to use email to get your students more involved in their community. We hope that you and your students enjoy the issue and the rest of the summer. —the Editor.

Hands-on English

Volume 12, Number 2
July/August 2002

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent.

About our Mini-grants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

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Hands-on English has more on the Web! You can find us at: www.handsonenglish.com

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Professional resource

"You, the ERIC Digests and the NIFL listserve are my most reliable (and my only on-going) sources of professional development! THANKS!"

—**Dottie Shattuck**, Charlotte, NC

Thanks, Dottie, that's nice to hear. For the other resources she mentioned, visit <www.cal.org/ncle>.

Eager readers

"I've enjoyed reading H.O.E. for a number of years!! You have such a practical approach and such a caring, cheerful tone ... I always feel energized after reading your great publication! Thanks for addressing this special need. All the best, "

—**Janet Mersereau**, Portland, OR

"An extra thank you! for re-mailing an issue to me that the post office sent back to you. That is 'going the extra mile'! I use something from every issue. I have spread the word and several people have become subscribers. Maybe some day I'll be creative enough to send you an idea.

—**Mary Rose Jansen**, Gresham OR

"I've even begun to use these fine tips and 'hands-on' classroom options for my graduate TESOL students! Thanks!"

—**Denise L. Link-Farajali**, Baltimore, MD

Needs workshop info

"Thanks for a great publication. I have used ideas in the classroom with individuals I've tutored. As a lay person I'd like word about workshops and training in my area."

—**Martha Neal**, Atlanta GA

Editor's note: Although this information would be too detailed to include in HOE, we do maintain an ESL events calendar on our website! You can find it at:

www.handsonenglish.com/Eventscalendar.html

We try to include there any conferences and workshops that we hear about. However, there may be some we aren't aware of. If any of our readers know of professional development events not listed on our website, please let us know. Thank you!

Budget woes

"Hi! I love *Hands-on English*. Unfortunately, my college's budget situation has been quite bad and we were told there wasn't even the money in the budget to renew. However, I don't want to go without HOE. [personal check enclosed] Keep up the great work!"

This letter came from a reader in one of the many U.S. states that are experiencing cutbacks in education funding this year. We expect to hear more such news in the next year or so. But, things will get better again. Hands-on English has seen difficult times for adult ed come and go before.

In the meantime, we try hard to bring you a valuable resource at an affordable price. We know that teachers very often pay for materials out of their own pockets!

Price increase announcement

Speaking of budgets, for the first time in six years *Hands-on English* needs to raise subscription prices to help cover postage increases and our operating costs. Given our understanding of *your* constraints, we've found a way to give you a good deal and ease the pain a little!

While subscription rates will go up by several dollars (individuals will pay $29 per year and groups $42 per year), we will be expanding the size of HOE at the same time to 20 pages, bringing you even more useful material in every issue. This is possible because of slightly more advertising from ESL publishers who value your attention, and we are grateful for this.

The new 20-page issue means 24 more pages per year for you, at a cost per page that is nearly the same as before. Like getting another issue-and-a-half of HOE, each year! We hope you'll like this deal.

New rates go into effect on the 1st of September. ***Tip***—renew your subscription early at the old rate, and save $ now!

From the field:
Email encourages outings

Many instructors may be familiar with students who are still nervous or uncertain about getting out into the community. Here's an interesting way to encourage them!

Starting an Email list

I've been tutoring a wide age range of Japanese students in the Chicago area, and have an especially large segment of stay-at-home moms. Before recent visa changes, these mothers were on spouse visas and could not work. Many were anxious about using the train or getting involved in the community, mostly for lack of knowledge and experience.

My students are all new to Chicago and only stay 4–7 years before being transferred again. They all use email, but only a few have the language skills to read through an English language newspaper, gathering information. The newspapers are intimidating for them, and they don't know where to find information about area festivals or other offerings.

I asked my students if they'd like to receive email messages from me about the city and things to do in the area. I collected their email addresses, and put together an email folder of my students in my address book. Now I can send weekly 'Chicago News' announcements to these students, with a list of activities or other items of interest.

To do this, I read through the newspapers and collect information on area festivals, holiday celebrations and parades, local sales and special bargains (40% off this weekend only!), and other upcoming events (park district Easter egg hunts, free outdoor summer concerts, pumpkin farms, apple orchards, etc.) and seasonal recipes (for tomatoes, rhubarb, Christmas cookies, Hanukkah latkes, etc.). Items might also include quick vacation locations and toll-free numbers for travel information.

I sometimes also include sky watching suggestions (relatively easy for everyone, even those in a large city) from a terrific website: The Abrams Planetarium "Skywatcher's Diary" hosted by Michigan State University. Their listings for each month include daily planetary and star changes. The website tells you where to look in the sky, what you'll see, and what to look forward to. You can find this information at:

<http://www.pa.msu.edu/abrams/
SkyWatchersDiary/Diary.html>

Another tip for students who are interested is to download this month's sky chart from <http://skymaps.com>.

This browsing takes a short time for me to do, then I send a group email message to everyone on the list. My email posting enables the students to learn about area activities in a readable format.

A student came to class once raving about the last-minute sale information I had sent about an outlet store (we just happened to receive a flyer in the mail that day for the next weekend's sale). The woman next to her in class said she hadn't checked her email recently, and her friend told her she missed out on some good information. Not everything will appeal to all your students, but it will put them in touch with you more often, and perhaps encourage them to communicate with you, too. And it is valuable for people new to your area who are worried or anxious about venturing into the city.

I often think how I would need this type of information myself if I were living in another country. The best part? —When I saw one student with three pages of my email suggestions printed off her computer, ready to distribute to her friends.

Susan Gavin *in Chicago, Illinois, has been an ESL instructor for the past 13 years, and has been tutoring Japanese families (children through adult).*

Susan says: "I've been a reader of HOE for a while and thought it was time to send a comment for the next issue. I hope this idea helps the tutors who read HOE."

Below is an excerpt from Susan's recent email message to her students:

Hello everyone,

There are many interesting events and activities for you and your families this month (please see the list below).

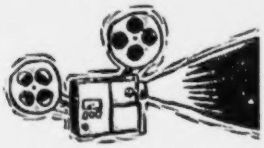
Sincerely, Susan Gavin

• The Chicago City Pass
A discount pass for 5 Chicago museums and the planetarium. For residents and visitors. No waiting in line at the museums. After the first use, you must use the pass within 9 days.
price: $39. (adult pass)
$29. (kids age 3-11)
(If a family of 4 people visits all 6 museums, they will save $111.)
(707) 256-0490 or www.city-pass.com

• Long Grove Strawberry Fest
June 21-22-23, 10:00-6:00 p.m. Free music, entertainment, clowns, rides, kids' activities. Free parking and free admission. www.longgroveonline.com

• free Loop Train Tour
Free 40-minute tours of downtown Chicago on the 'L' , Chicago's train system.
Saturday afternoons, downtown Chicago
Tickets: First, pick up your tickets at the Chicago Cultural Center's Visitor Information Center, 77 E. Randolph Street (they are free, but you must get them here). Tours begin at 11:35 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 12:55 p.m., and 1:35 p.m. at the Randolph/Wabash station.
(312) 744-2400 or (888) Y-O-U-R-C-T-A

Hints & tips:
More about movies



Movie suggestions

In our last issue, a reader had requested some help developing a list of films suitable for ESL students. Wow, did we ever get responses! Here are some ideas that have come in so far:

Dunstan Brooks in Kurume, Japan emailed us that the most popular film in his film library is ***Lilies of the Field***, a 1963 film starring Sidney Poitier and Lila Skala. The students recommend this one over and over to other students. They told him that the English in this film was easier than in other films they had watched, so they could follow the story well. One student mentioned it was the first non-action movie in English that she could follow without too much difficulty, thus giving her more confidence.

Linda Phipps in Midwest City, Oklahoma, also provides videos for her students to check out. She says the most popular of all are the TV shows of ***Little House on the Prairie***. *(Editor's note: This may seem like a children's title but includes many adult themes of survival.)*

Linda's other popular titles include musicals such as ***Mary Poppins***, ***Sound of Music*** and the ***Wizard of Oz***, as well as classics such as ***Black Beauty***, ***Heidi*** and ***Red River***.

Marilyn Sarich at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois, emailed us about a lesson she did with her students on ***The Last of the Mohicans*** with Daniel Day Lewis. She also had her students read an adaptation of the book (published by Fearon/Janus/Quercon and available from Wieser Educational Inc., 1-800-880-4433) as a companion to viewing the movie. To prepare for the book and movie they first had a 'quick and dirty' lesson about this time period in U.S. history.

Many movies are based on works of literature, and Marilyn recommends checking for abridged or adapted versions of a book from publishers, such as the Oxford Progressive English Readers and Penguin Readers. This makes good supplementary material for the movie.

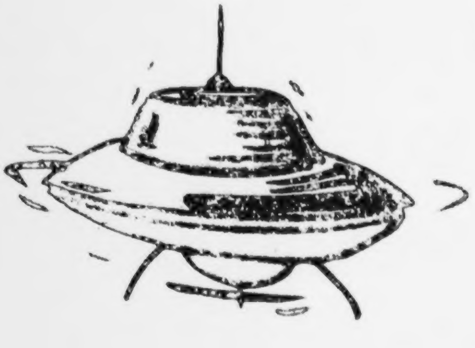
Finally, Marilyn reminds us of a very important resource on this topic! This is a book called "102 Very Teachable Movies" by Mejia, Xiao and Kennedy (1994 Prentice Hall, ISBN 0-13-106824-5). The 224-page book describes each movie, explains why it is useful in the classroom, gives ideas for teaching activities, and helps you locate the film. You can order this book from Alta Book Center, www.altaesl.com.

Loveable alien

Dottie Shattuck at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina wrote to tell us about watching ***E.T.*** with her students.

It started when a colleague, Renee Cheezum, used a short clip from the movie (the part where the brother & sister come into Eliot's bedroom and see ET for the first time) to illustrate vocabulary about descriptions and feelings. This scene elicits many such words, such as scared, tired, hungry, short, tall, homesick, nervous, etc.

Dottie's introductory-level students liked the clip and wanted to see the rest of the movie, so when the time came for a relaxing lesson, they made popcorn and saw the whole film. She said the students followed the whole story with little difficulty, as there isn't very much dialogue. Everyone responded to the humor and emotions in the movie, and there was a great discussion afterwards. Dottie says she recommends this for a low-key listening/talking activity.



Multi-level dictation:
Going to the DMV

Here's a true story (we changed the names and country) of an immigrant couple's experience applying for their driver's licenses.

Preparation

This activity would fit in well with other lessons about driving. (See "Dear Abbie" for suggestions on this topic, on pages 11, 12 and 13 of this issue.) Make a copy of the worksheet on the next page and cut apart the three levels. Then enlarge each level on your copier—this will make the blanks easier to write in. Now make plenty of copies of each worksheet. Remember, students may want to try the dictation more than once at different levels.

Discussion

First, ask your students about their experiences, if any, taking the driver's test. Was it difficult or easy? Why? Then read (or tell) them this story. Have the students retell the story to make sure they understand it, and try some of the discussion questions. If you wish, you can also pass out copies of the full text of the story for a reading exercise.

Dictation

Once students are very familiar with the story, they are ready to write the dictation. Have the students choose a level to try—A is easier; C is the hardest. For a real challenge (Level D), more advanced students can try using a blank sheet of paper. Read each sentence at a natural speed, pausing between each sentence to give students time to write. You can repeat the story as many times as the students wish.

When finished, the beauty of this exercise is that the students at different levels can help each other correct their writing, because they have different information on their sheets. Let students choose another level and repeat the exercise, if they wish. ☚

For ***literacy-level*** *students, if you give them a word list to work from they can succeed at Level A. As students listen, they look at the list, choose the correct word and copy it into each blank space.*

Here's the list for Level A: car, drive, he, home, husband, I, new, officer, pass, teach, teacher, test, U.S., weeks, wife, you.

Two driving tests

Sasha and Elena are husband and wife from Ukraine. Sasha used to drive a car, but Elena didn't know how to drive. When they came to the U.S., Sasha said to his wife, "Don't worry, I will teach you how to drive."

After a few weeks they both went to the DMV. They both took the written test and passed. Elena took her road test first. She was nervous, but the officer said, "Congratulations! You passed." Then Sasha took his road test. When he came back, he looked unhappy. "I didn't pass," he said. "I have to try again later."

When they went home, Elena had a new driver's license. "Don't worry," she told her husband, "I think you are a very good teacher."

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 14 sentences (124 words).

Vocabulary needed:

driver's license, written test, road test, take a test, pass, fail.

Discussion

1. Why do you think Sasha failed his road test?
2. Do you have some advice for him for next time?
3. Can you drive a car? If so, who taught you? Was it difficult or easy to learn?

Two driving tests—Level A

Sasha and Elena are __________ and ______ from Ukraine. Sasha used to drive a _____ , but Elena didn't know how to _________ . When they came to the ______ , Sasha said to his _______ , "Don't worry, I will _________ you how to _______ ."

After a few _________ they both went to the DMV. They both took the written _______ and passed. Elena took her road ________ first. She was nervous, but the __________ said, "Congratulations! _______ passed." Then Sasha took his road _______ . When he came back, _____ looked unhappy. "I didn't _______ ," he said. "_____ have to try again later."

When they went ________ , Elena had a _______ driver's license. "Don't worry," she told her __________ , "I think ______ are a very good ___________ ."

Two driving tests—Level B

Sasha and Elena _____ __________ ______ _______ from Ukraine. Sasha used to _______ _____ ______ , but Elena didn't know ______ _______ ________ . When they _______ _____ ______ ________ , Sasha _______ to his wife, "Don't worry, _____ ______ ________ you how to drive."

After a few weeks they both _______ _____ ____ DMV. They both _______ ______ written ______ and passed. Elena _______ _______ road _____ first. She was nervous, but _____ _________ _______ , "Congratulations! You ________ ." Then Sasha _______ _____ _______ ________ . When _____ ______ back, he looked _________ . "I _________ _______ ," he said. "I have to _______ ________ later."

When they ______ ________ , Elena _____ ____ new driver's _________ . "Don't _______ ," she told her husband, "I think ______ ______ ____ ______ ________ teacher."

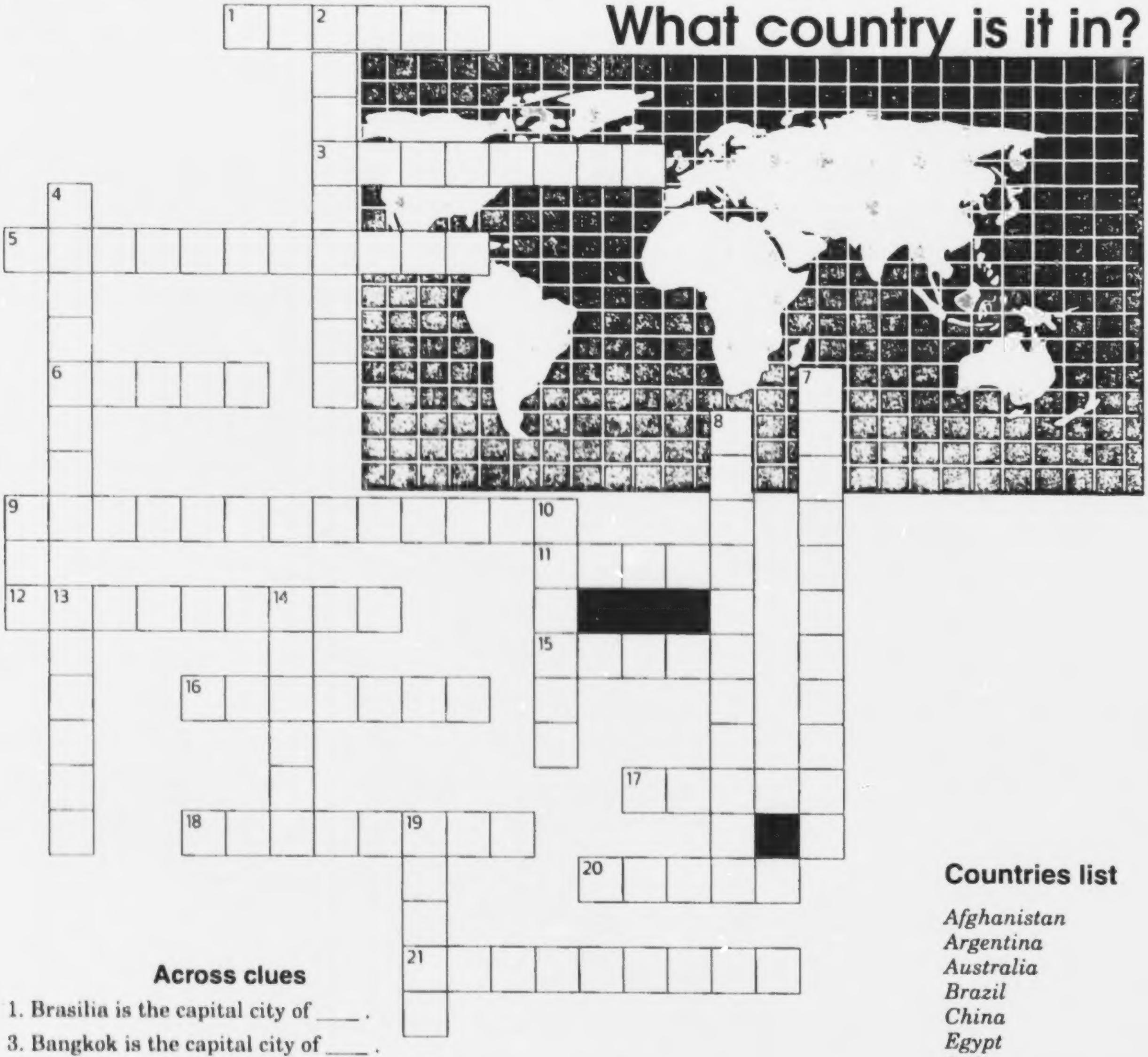
Two driving tests—Level C

Sasha and Elena _____ husband and wife _______ _________ . Sasha _______ _____ _______ ____ ________ , but Elena _______ ________ ______ ____ drive. _______ _______ _______ to the U.S., Sasha _______ _____ ______ ________ , "Don't worry, _____ _____ ______ ______ ______ _____ _______ ."

_______ ____ ______ ________ they both _______ _____ _____ _______ . They both _______ ______ ___________ _______ and _______ . Elena ______ _____ _______ _______ first. She _______ ________ , but ______ ________ _______ , "Congratulations! _______ ________ ." Then Sasha _______ _______ _______ ________ . When _____ _______ ________ , he _______ __________ . "______ ________ _______ ," he said. "I _______ _____ ______ ________ later."

_______ ______ ______ ______ ________ , Elena ______ _____ ______ ________ ________ . "Don't worry," ______ _______ ______ _________ , "I _________ _____ _____ ____ ________ ________ teacher."

Crossword puzzle:
Countries and capital cities



Across clues

1. Brasilia is the capital city of ____ .
3. Bangkok is the capital city of ____ .
5. Riyadh is the capital city of ____ .
6. Khartoum is the capital city of ____ .
9. London is the capital city of ____ .
11. Cairo is the capital city of ____ ..
12. Buenos Aires is the capital city of ____ .
15. New Delhi is the capital city of ____ .
16. Kiev is the capital city of ____ .
17.Beijing is the capital city of ____ .
18. Kuala Lumpur is the capital city of ____ .
20. Tokyo is the capital city of ____ .
21. Jakarta is the capital city of ____ .

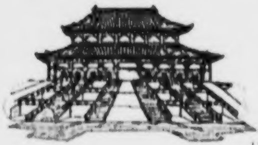
Down clues

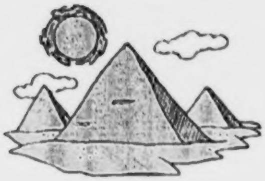
2. Canberra is the capital city of ____ .
4. Islamabad is the capital city of ____ .
7. Kabul is the capital city of ____ .
8. Pretoria is the capital city of ____ .
9. Washington is the capital city of ____ .
10. Mexico City is the capital city of ____ .
13. Moscow is the capital city of ____ .
14. Jerusalem is the capital city of ____ .
19. Madrid is the capital city of ____ .

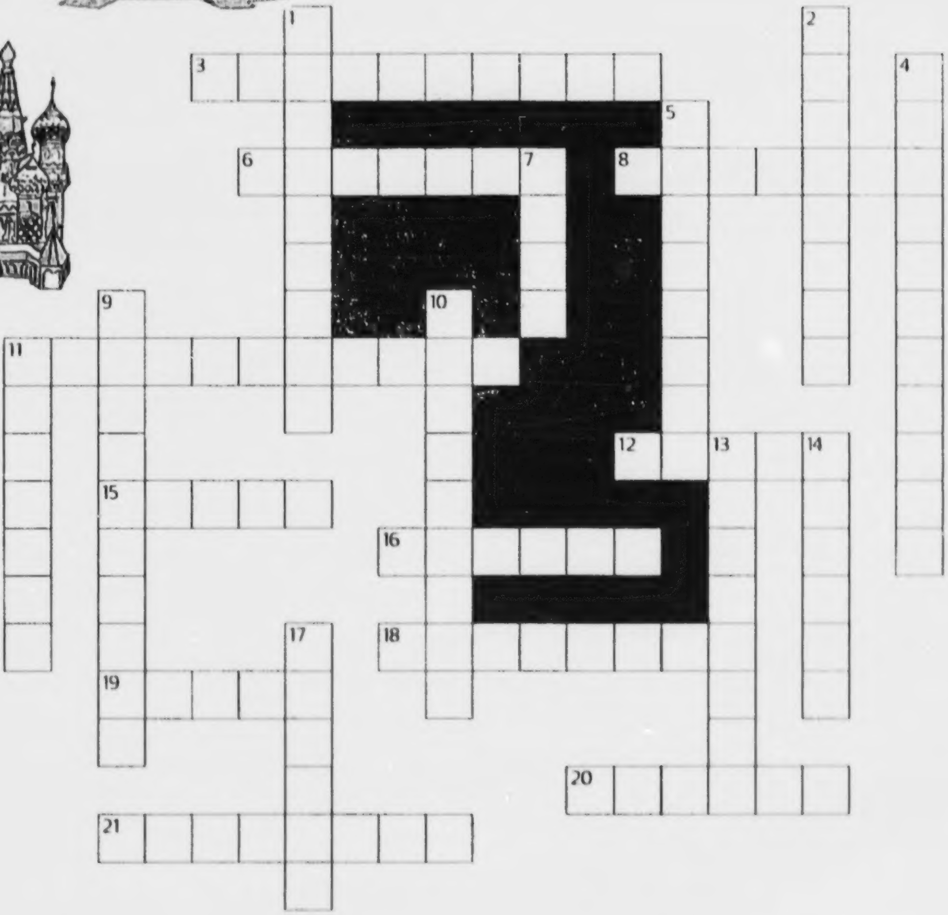
Countries list

Afghanistan
Argentina
Australia
Brazil
China
Egypt
India
Indonesia
Israel
Japan
Malaysia
Mexico
Pakistan
Russia
Saudi Arabia
South Africa
Spain
Sudan
Thailand
Ukraine
United Kingdom
USA

What is the capital city?







Cities list

Bangkok
Beijing
Brasilia
Buenos Aires
Cairo
Canberra
Islamabad
Jakarta
Jerusalem
Kabul
Khartoum
Kiev
Kuala Lumpur
London
Madrid
Mexico City
Moscow
New Delhi
Pretoria
Riyadh
Tokyo
Washington

Across clues

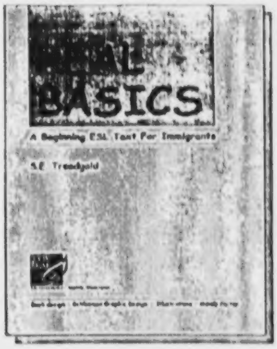
3. This is the capital city of the USA.
6. This is the capital of Thailand.
8. This is the capital of Indonesia.
11. This is the capital of Argentina.
12. This is the capital of Afghanistan.
15. This is the capital of Egypt.
16. This is the capital of Spain.
18. This is the capital of India.
19. This is the capital of Japan.
20. This is the capital of Saudi Arabia.
21. This is the capital of South Africa.

Down clues

1. This is the capital of Pakistan.
2. This is the capital of Sudan.
4. This is the capital of Malaysia.
5. This is the capital of Australia.
7. This is the capital of Ukraine.
9. This is the capital of Mexico.
10. This is the capital of Israel.
11. This is the capital of China.
13. This is the capital of Brazil.
14. This is the capital of United Kingdom.
17. This is the capital of Russia.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials



Real Basics; A Beginning ESL Text For Immigrants by S.E. Treadgold (2000 New Leaf ESL Materials). ISBN 0-9663705-2-X. There is also a "Teacher's Companion" with photocopiable materials. Available from Pro Lingua Associates, 800-366-4775.

This book for real beginners has 13 chapters organized by theme, such as Food and Shopping, Family, etc. Within each unit structures are introduced and practiced with simple written exercises. The drawings are nicely personalized with fictional adult characters. The *Teacher's Companion* provides more visuals for oral work and ready-to-use exercises such as street map activities, scrambled sentences and paired dictations. Unlike many books for beginners, the text is simple and uncluttered.

ESL teacher Stephanie Thomas in Poway, California, volunteered to try out this material with her students. Here's her report:

"I used the book in my Low Beginning classroom as soon as it arrived. The student response to the book was encouraging; they understood the grammar points and companion illustrations quickly. The exercises we worked on were cognitively engaging and easy to follow. I liked them because they tuck nicely into our thematic units. Plural rules accompany food, prepositions accompany body parts, present continuous tense describes the activities of people in a restaurant. . .and so on. During our U.S. history & geography unit, we worked on an activity on possessive pronouns from the book which asks, "whose is it?" People attending a carnival (which is certainly a part of U.S. culture) are holding things like cotton candy, hot dogs, and soda.

"Just as important as the grammar point are the relevant vocabulary words that the book introduces. The reproducible work sheets make clean overhead transparencies that students sitting way in the back can see with ease. Illustrations that highlight the grammar points are free of any distracting details resulting in nice, obvious visuals that clearly make their point. I would easily place this book high on my favorites list (which is saying something because for every book I keep, I toss about three). *Real Basic*'s clean, uncluttered approach makes it a crisp, clear almost fool-proof addition to my arsenal of class activities.

"My only reservations about this book are, first, I would make the names of the steady characters in the book obvious in every visual. During the carnival activity, for example, I had to refer to the front of the book to identify the characters in order to pull this activity off with my class. I would also make extensive revisions to *A Teacher's Companion for Real Basics* because there are far too many cut-and-paste activities. While these kinesthetic activities can be useful in class from time to time, for teachers with open enrollment classes where class size and individual attendance vary greatly from one month to the next, these activities can try everyone's patience. Teachers who borrow their classrooms from one period to the next must either lug around 20 pairs of scissors or cut up all these little cards ahead of time for each class.

"Thanks very much for the opportunity to review this text. It was fun to get to know a new book." ☚

Our book review committee

Would you like to help *Hands-on English* review books that might be of interest to your colleagues? Our readers like to hear how other teachers used materials in their classroom, and what the students thought. If you'd like to participate, please contact the editor, anna@handsonenglish.com. Thank you!

Also, if you have heard of texts that you'd like us to review, please let us know. We plan on bringing you reviews as a regular feature in our upcoming, expanded issues, starting in September. ☚

Vocabulary activity:

Who has the definition?

Here's a great interactive "Listen and say" exercise to help your students practice car vocabulary. For details, see the article on page 12 of this issue.

Start: the hood

The engine is inside of this.
Car part: windshield wiper

Definition: This goes back and forth and cleans the windshield
Car part: tires

Definition: These are full of air. They touch the road.
Car part: motor

Definition: This makes your car go.
Car part: turn signal

Definition: This tells the person behind you that you are going to turn.
Car part: speedometer

Definition: This tells you how fast you are going.
Car part: trunk

Definition: You keep suitcases and your extra tire in here.
Car part: rearview mirror

Definition: You look in this to see what is behind you.
Car part: seat belt

Definition: You put this around you so that you are safe in the car.
Car part: accelerator

Definition: You step on this to make the car go faster
Car part: brake

Definition: You step on this to stop the car.
Car part: steering wheel

Definition: You use this to change the direction of your car.
The end

Dear Abbie:
Preparing to drive

Dear Abbie,

How can I teach my group of intermediate students to deal with the Department of Motor Vehicles, both to register a car and to apply and test for a driver's licence? Thank you. —*Olivia August*

Abbie responds:

Not all of my students plan to drive, so when I teach about cars and driving I usually broaden the unit to include public transportation and even rules for pedestrians. But for now, let's just look at driving and cars.

The first task is to find some materials. One of the nice things about teaching this topic is that there is so much free material available. First check the materials published by your state: there are driver's handbooks, pictures of road signs, and sometimes special brochures summarizing how to get a license or report an accident.

A good way to start any unit is by dividing the board into two parts (or use two sheets of paper, in which case you can post them at the end of the unit as you review) and have students write in the lefthand column what they know about cars and driving and in the right, what they want to know. This gives you some direction as you plan the unit. Sometimes you end up covering completely unanticipated material (such as how to install a baby seat).

Car parts vocabulary

I like to start with the parts of a car. I have the students draw a car and label it as I do the same on the board. One way to practice this vocabulary is by playing "car part bingo." First we go over a list of definitions and match them to the car parts. Next (usually on a different day), the students draw a bingo grid (5 horizontal squares and 5 vertical). Then I read the names of the car parts and they put them anywhere on the grid. The result is that each person has a different game board. To play the game, I read the definitions and they find the correct word. (I use only 24 words for the game.) The square in the middle is designated "free." Students can signify that they have 5 in a row by raising their hands or saying "beep beep." We usually use the same grid three times. The first time the students mark the space with a small X; the second time with a small O and the third time by drawing a line across the square.

Who has the definition?

Another interesting way to practice the new vocabulary is with a "listen and say" activity. [*Turn to page 11 in this issue to see this exercise.*] Print one copy of the page for each group of students and cut the strips apart ahead of time. Give each student a strip (if there are too few strips, they can share; if there are too many, one student can have two strips). The one who has "start" reads the first vocabulary item: "the hood". The student who has the definition ("the engine is inside of this") reads it aloud and then reads his car part. This continues until everyone has read his or her strip. Usually the first time somebody gets mixed up and not everybody gets to read his strip. If that happens, start again. It may take a little time for the students to do it correctly, but they always enjoy doing it successfully. After they have done it correctly once, collect and redistribute the strips so they can try again. This is a nice cooperative listening and speaking activity, which requires the students to speak clearly and listen carefully.

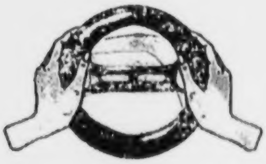
'How to drive' scrambled story

This is another activity with paper strips, which helps the students remember what is expected of them when they take the driving test. Print the page below and cut enough copies of the strips for each pair of students to have a set. Alternatively, you can

—by **Abbie Tom**, ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

Abbie Tom is a veteran teacher who has published a number of books and has given teacher training workshops. We are pleased to get her teaching advice in response to your questions.

Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at ***Hands-on English*** *and we will pass these along to her. Thank you!*



"How to drive"*—enlarge these sentences on your copier and cut them into strips. Shuffle them, and have students put them in the correct order.*

Adjust the seat to the right position for you.

Start driving.

Check the rearview and side mirrors.

Close the door.

Put the key in the ignition.

Get in.

Open the door.

Put on your seatbelt.

Put the gear shift in the drive position.

Turn the key.

Check in the mirror to see if anyone is coming.

Great stuff in HOE's back issues!

Hands-on English has all of our back issues available (some of the older ones as reprints). That's nearly 11 years of useful teaching materials! You can order these for $5 each; order 10 or more and get them for $4 each. See a detailed description of all the back issues on our website at:

www.handsonenglish.com/backissues.html

You can order online, by mail, or call us toll free at 1-800- 375-4263. —*H.O.E.*

Pearls of Wisdom; African and Caribbean Folktales by Raouf Mama and Mary Romney. As reviewed in *Hands-on English*, May/June 2002! Twelve classic stories told by a master, for intermediate students to read, listen or read along. Text ISBN 0-86647-134-0, $12.50. A workbook with integrated skills exercises and cassette tapes are also available.

Pro Lingua Associates

Orders and information: 800-366-4775 or prolingu@sover.net

Driving, cont'd...

print them on big strips and give each student a strip. The students' task is to put the strips in order. Usually there is some discussion about the exact sequence.

Practice with signs

Students need to learn the names of road signs in order to pass the test. One way to do that is to take the pictures of road signs from the state driver's handbook and print them somewhat larger than they appear in the book. Cut off the name of the sign ("yield" or "stop"). Paste both on index cards, place upside down and use them to play "concentration." Individual students, playing in groups of 3 or 4, try to match the sign with the name. If they succeed, they keep both. If not, they turn them over again and the next student plays.

Grammar

Driving rules provide an excellent opportunity to practice *must, have to, must not* and *don't have to*. Write the following list on the board or dictate it to the students. Have them work in pairs to decide whether each item should be preceded by *You must…, You have to…, You must not…* or *You don't have to*. Have the students put their sentences on the board and see if all agree.

get a driver's license
get license plates
get liability insurance
drive when you drink
wear a seatbelt
have a special seat for young children
obey traffic signals
drive on the left side
use your headlights in the daytime
use your head-lights at night
use your headlights when it's raining
let ambulances pass you
drive over 35 in the city
go fast in a school zone
lock your car

You can continue this exercise with examples that the students select from the state Driver's Manual. That way they will be carefully reviewing the material while practicing this grammar structure.

Emergency procedures

Insurance companies are a good source for information on reporting accidents. You could use that information as a reading. After the students read about this, have them re-state the steps in their own words and write them on the board. A good way to help them remember the steps is with these words: *stop, help, call, write*.

Student-made driver's manual

Here's a project that helps students to study the driving material: have them prepare a booklet for future students, or for students in other levels. The students brainstorm topics they feel are important (driving rules, tips, getting a license, etc.), choose their preferred topic and then work together in groups to write about that topic. This is effective because making something clear to others is a good way to understand it more clearly yourself.

Choosing a car

Of course if your students are ready to get a driver's license, they also want to buy cars. Information on car models and prices taken from classified ads make a nice dictation (e.g., a 1997 Ford Mustang for $9500, call 555-6720). Don't forget that even intermediate students need practice listening to numbers and to words spelled out. Classified ads themselves can also be used. Give each pair of students a chunk of ads from the newspaper (they need not all be the same) and have them find a car that is suitable for them. 🖘

Resources:

- *Listening Tasks for Intermediate Students of American English* by Sandra Schecter (Cambridge U Press, ISBN 0-521-27898-8) has a nice lesson on calling a garage as well as one on reporting an accident.
- *The Card Book* by Abigail Tom and Heather McKay (Alta Books, ISBN 1-882483-79-0) has copiable road sign cards and activities to go with them
- Insurance companies and gasoline companies often produce driving safety materials.

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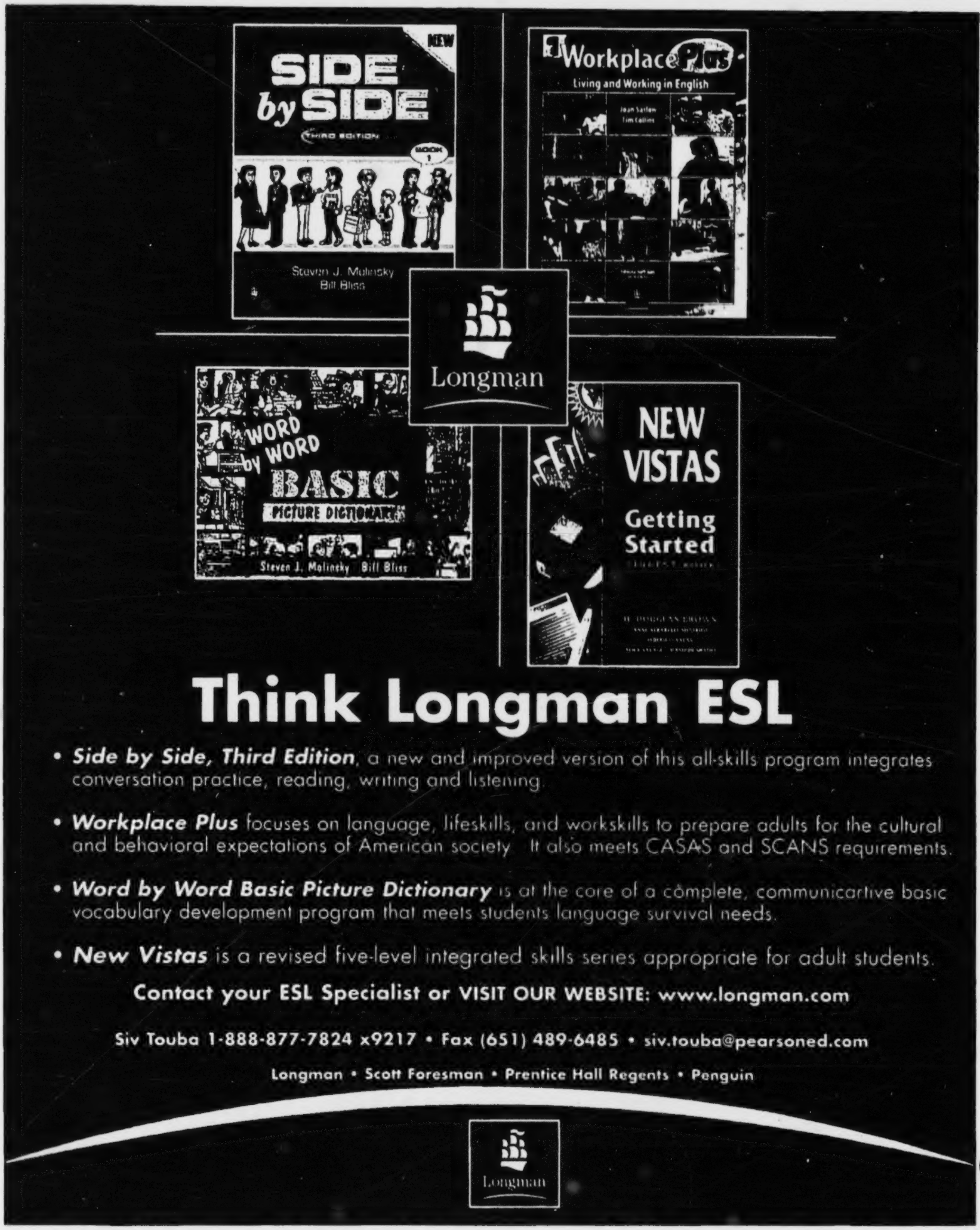
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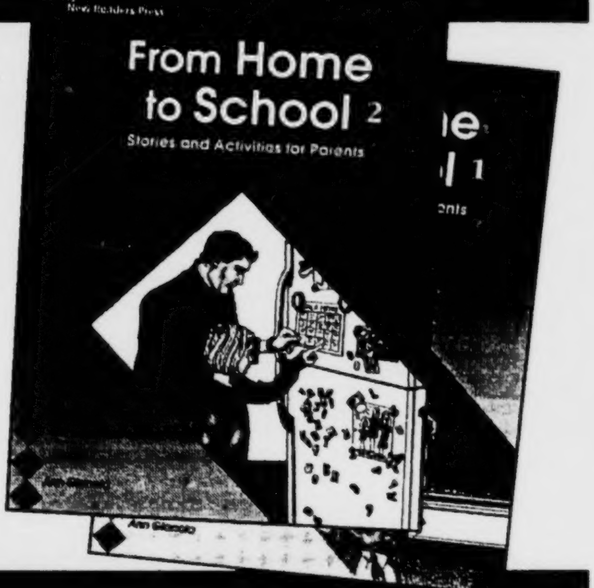

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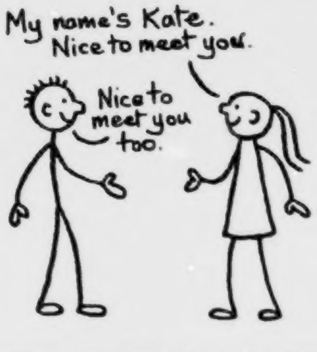
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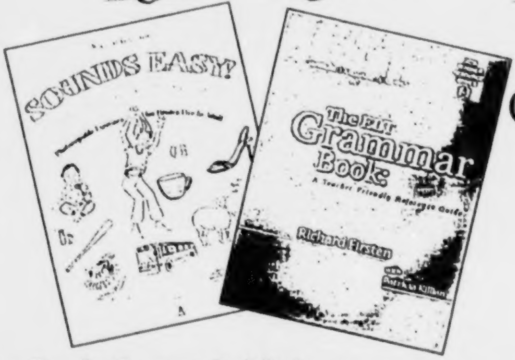

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Hot summer weather? We've had some puzzles on this topic in previous issues. There's a multi-level puzzle called 'Summertime' in Vol. 6, No. 1 and a puzzle about 'Keeping cool' in Vol. 9, No. 2. Also, there's a great little listening activity about the different seasons in Vol. 10, No. 3.

Crazy weather? Drought, floods, fires? See Vol. 7, No. 1 for a vocabulary exercise to help your students understand and discuss the weather news. And if you want to dwell further on bad weather, see 'Storms and natural disasters,' a multi-level puzzle in Vol. 8, No. 2.

Moving? People often change their residence in the summer, before the new school year starts. We had a series of activities about 'Moving day' last year in Vol. 11, No. 2. These included two puzzles, a reading activity and a board game for discussion practice.

Does August seem boring? Not if you are Linda Phipps—see her 'Events of the month' activity in Vol. 10, No. 2 for some ideas.

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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You're more than a number to us

We here at *Hands-on English* have been awash in numbers recently! Over the summer we sent out thousands of flyers to ESL programs, and many new subscribers have been joining us as a result. Because of our recent price increase, we sent out a 'special offer' to our current subscribers, and so floods of renewals have come in to the office in the past few weeks. We're still catching up on these orders!

We had many calls from subscribers wanting to know about their expiration date. We've started asking folks for their customer number when they call (it's on your label and starts with a 'C-'), just because it's a rapid and accurate way to find your record, but of course we can still find you if you don't happen to have this number handy.

We never used to ask for people's phone numbers when they subscribed, just because we couldn't imagine bothering busy teachers with a phone call! But starting this fall we do ask for a phone number or email address on orders, just so that we can straighten out any questions as quickly as possible. This has already been useful. One question we occasionally need to clarify—is this a renewal subscription under a different instructor's name, or an additional subscription to the same address? Sometimes the only way to be sure is to pick up the phone and ask.

Another type of number we tend to obsess about—zip codes. We've found that those annoying little 4-digit addons do help to make the mail delivery faster and more accurate, plus they help us to qualify for lower rates on bulk mailings. So, for each and every new address, we have to verify the street address with the Post Office (via their website) and locate the correct 4-digit code. Our goal is to reduce any mailing problems to zero.

We think the total number of our subscribers may grow to as many as 2,500 over the next couple of issues. Since many of these are multi-user subscriptions, we estimate there are between 5,000 and 6,000 readers. Maybe more!

So, we have to think about increasing our printing run, mailing out larger mailings, and perhaps spending more hours on bookkeeping. Yet in spite of that, we don't feel the numbers are too large. It has been a pleasure to talk with the people who've called this fall, and it's been good to get your emails. This 'business' still seems to us like we are working with friends and colleagues, and of course we hope it will always be like that.

One more new number—starting with this issue, the number of pages we are publishing will increase to 20. So even more than ever, we are eager to hear from our readers who are willing to share tips and lesson ideas with us! Help!

It seems like the HOE office gets a little busier every year. But talking with our readers is still our favorite thing to do! We want you to know that, just as *you* always have time for your students, *we* always have time for you. We can produce a better issue if we know what your needs and interests are. So, keep in touch and let us know what's up! Thank you!

—the Editor.

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Volume 12, Number 3
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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent.

About our Mini-grants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

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See you there!

Editor Anna Silliman, busy previewing some ESL materials for HOE.

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Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Many messages from readers

We thought it would be fun to share with you some of the messages we received from readers sending in their renewal orders. Here are a few of them:

"Great resource!"
—**Lynn Schaefer**, Conway, AR

"I always enjoy reading HOE and I always find some great ideas to pass along to tutors. Thanks."
—**Cathy Forsythe**, Mifflin Co. Library Literacy Program, Lewistown, PA

"Greatest creation for ESL teachers—each issue gets better and better!"
—**Beverly Martin**, Thomasville NC

"I continue to really enjoy HOE. There is *always* something for my students there."
—**Wendy Lancourt**, Piermont, NY

"Thanks so much for everything in your issues. I don't know what I'd do without you! I keep all my issues, of course, and use them over and over as my students change. You are the best!"
—**Marsha D. Kennedy**, Pittsburgh, PA

"Great teaching tool! It saves me time on lesson planning."

—**Carmen Chadziutko**, Literacy Council of Campbell County, Gillette, WY

"HOE has the practical stuff I need for my students. I just plug something from each issue into my classes. Keep 'em comin'!"
—**Mary Grace**, Wolftown, VA

"What a service you provide! So many ideas for my teaching."
—**Eleanor November**, Scarsdale, NY

"Thanks for a great resource, and the opportunity to extend subscriptions at the lower rate."
—**Kathy Quesada**, Mtn View-Los Altos Adult School, Mountain View, CA

"We love it! Our ESL tutors are thrilled."
—**Pat Ehora**, Northwest Literacy Council, Lima, OH

"I use HOE in my graduate TESOL courses and students enjoy the simple, straightforward style of the articles and activities. Many have been successfully implemented with ESL students. Keep up the great work!"
—**Mareen T. Walsh**, Garden City, NY

"Love your newsletter! Keep it coming!"

—**Elizabeth M. Strand**, Cathedral City, CA *(teaching since 1955 and love it.)*

And one suggestion. . .

"It would be better monthly."
—**Gina Taeuber**, Cypress, TX

(We'll respond to this one as soon as the editor revives from falling over on the floor in a faint. . .)

HOE needs holiday humdingers

Have you got a favorite holiday or seasonal activity for your ESL students? Are there ESL resources you love to use for special events? Can you recommend some materials? Give some advice on seasonal lessons? Tell an anecdote about a past holiday lesson? And, do you have a home-made activity you'd like to share? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

We're collecting advice and tips about holiday events for any season. We hope to bring you some suggestions for winter events in our upcoming issue. Thanks for your help!

Hoe, Hoe, Hoe!

Hints & tips

Lively discussion activity

One of our very popular activities (from Vol. 1, No. 2) is called 'Controversy cards' and is a great way to get your students talking and writing about questions of major importance. Students are given a only short time to agree or disagree with each statement and to say why. They do this in small groups, then later focus on one topic of their choice in more detail.

Ann Marie Gogniat sent us some additional 'controversial statements' to use in this activity. She said these worked very well with her advanced conversation class. We thought other readers would enjoy these:

- The United States is the greatest country in the world.
- Teenage homosexual dating is okay.
- Women who give birth to drug-addicted babies should be charged with child abuse.
- Children under the age of two should not be in daycare.
- Teenagers should not have access to contraception.
- Britney Spears is a good role model for young girls.
- Elvis Presley is still alive.
- People should not marry until they are 25 years old.
- The driving age should be raised to 18.

If you don't have the back issue with the 'Controversy cards' activity in it, you can find another version of the same activity on our website. Go to www.handsonenglish.com and look for our 'current events' page. This one is listed as the July '98 activity. Happy arguing!

Goal setting is helpful

Susan Gavin, long-time ESL tutor in the Chicago, Illinois area, sends us this advice for tutors (but it's great for teachers, too). She says:

"Have a specific goal for each student. At your first lesson (or later, whenever their needs change), give your students some surveys to complete.

"An *Interest Survey* includes questions about their favorite season, foods and places, questions about birthdays, family, hobbies, etc. As your students talk about their answers, you'll have an opportunity to listen to their speech and evaluate their grammatical patterns and vocabulary skills. You'll also get to know the students this way.

"On a *Goal Sheet*, ask your students their goals for your lessons. Some students assume the teacher already knows their needs and wants, and they will probably acquiesce to your suggestions, but it's more helpful if an adult student articulates their own goals specifically.

"If your students write down a vague answer such as 'I want to communicate better,' ask them some questions to narrow down the field. Your job will be easier if you know your students want to practice verb tenses to better communicate with their children's teachers at school. If your students don't know how to describe their goals specifically, ask them in which situations they need to speak English: at school, at the supermarket, at the library, in stores, at work? Then follow this up with more questions: Do they have trouble with vocabulary in those situations? Do they have trouble with pronunciation, or with comprehension?

"The more specific your students' goals are, the easier your job will be in finding textbooks, planning oral practice activities, and organizing worksheets."

More about driving

Barbara Entz, ESL instructor in Omaha, Nebraska, wrote to say that the lessons on driving vocabulary (Vol. 11, No. 2) were appreciated by her students in the International Women's Club. She added her list of special tips to remind new drivers:

1. Left turn to left lane; right turn to right lane.
2. On an interstate highway, when a car enters from the entrance ram, if possible move to the left lane.
3. Use your blinkers! It signals to the driver behind you about your intentions.
4. Yellow light—what does it mean? Do you go through on yellow?
5. Don't stop and block a street or entrance.
6. When to turn on headlights.
7. When to call police about an accident.
8. Parking lot driving.
9. Stop for a school bus.

Barbara also sent us her own challenging puzzle on driving terms (see p. 5).

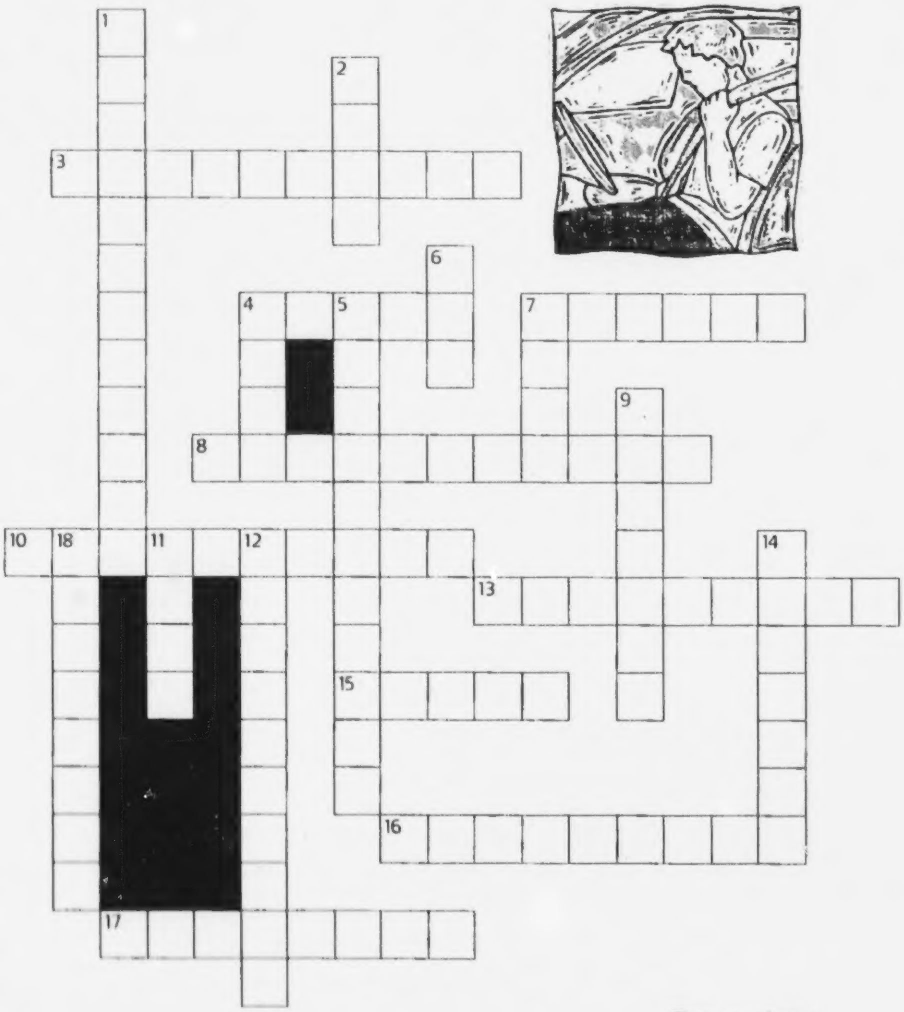
One more thing:

If you live in a climate where it's icy in winter, talk with your students about driving on ice. (S-L-O-W down!) See if you can bring in a guest speaker who knows how to give tips on this topic.

Puzzle:
Car parts and driving

Word list

- accelerator
- beep
- brake
- door
- gearshift
- headlights
- ignition
- insurance
- intersection
- key
- license
- park
- pedestrian
- reverse
- seatbelt
- speedometer
- ticket
- tire
- trunk
- windshield



This puzzle contributed by Barbara Entz, ESL instructor in Omaha, Nebraska.

For more tips and materials on teaching about driving, see our last issue, Vol. 12, No. 2 (July/August 2002).

Across clues

3. A person crossing the street.
4. This pedal makes the car stop.
7. What you get from a police officer when you speed.
8. This tells how fast you are going.
10. The big front window.
13. This puts the car in the drive position.
15. Place to put groceries, extra tire, etc.
16. Liability protection in case of an accident.
17. Put this on to be safe in the car.

Down clues

1. Where two streets meet.
2. What you do when you stop the car and get out.
4. The sound of the horn.
5. You step on this to make the car go faster.
6. You need this to unlock the car door.
7. The rubber wheel.
9. Make the car go backwards.
11. This opens the car so you can get in.
12. The lights on the front of the car.
14. A permit to drive.
18. Put the key in here to start the car.

Multi-level dictation:
A letter to the editor

This exercise could be used as part of a letter-writing unit (see pages 10–11 for a related puzzle about all aspects of writing). It also fits in well with discussions of current events, because it's a way to link the students' own experiences and ideas with what's in the news.

Preparation

Make a copy of the worksheest on the next two pages. Cut apart the levels, enlarge each one (to make the spaces easier to write in), then make copies for your students. Be sure to make extra copies, as students often like to try this exercise more than once at different levels.

Read and discuss the story with your students. Some questions to consider:

- If you could be interviewed for the newspaper or TV, what would you like to say?
- Why does the student in the story want to send a letter?
- Should he send the letter, or is it better to be quiet? (There will be several good arguments both pro and con.)
- Have you ever written a letter to the newspaper? Can you do this in your country?
- Discuss the First Amendment to the Constitution (free speech) and what it means. What are the limitations on this? (ie., slander, libel, criminal activity, and any special circumstances due to current events.)

Now give the dictation, speaking at a natural speed but pausing between sentences for the students to write.

Customize for your students

You can make this activity more relevant to your students by choosing a name and country that relates to them. For example, some men's names:

José from Colombia
Tariz from Afghanistan
Luiz from Argentina
Amad from Saudi Arabia
Gregor from Serbia
Sasha from Russia
Han from China
Julio from Mexico

To use one of these examples, you'll need to white-out and make corrections on each sheet for the country name in 2 places, and for the student's name in 3 places. (Note that if you choose a woman's name you'll also have to change *he* to *she* in 3 places, *him* to *her* in 2 places, and *his* to *her* in 4 places.)

Five levels are provided on the next two pages.

For ***literacy-level*** *students, you can supply them with a word list to copy from so that they can succeed at Level A. Here's the word list: class, day, friends, he, in, letter, not, student, teacher, the, they, think, true, write, you.*

When your students are finished writing, have them help each other to correct the dictation. Level A students can provide information for Level B, C, D, and E students, because they have a more complete text!

A letter to the editor

Hassan is an ESL student from Iraq. One day he read an article about Iraq in the newspaper. His teacher asked him, "What did you think about this article?"

Hassan said, "Some things in the article are true. But some things are not true. I don't agree with everything in the article. I think the journalist doesn't understand."

His teacher said "Why don't you write a letter to the editor of the newspaper? You can explain your ideas to them." So Hassan wrote a letter. His friends helped him think about what to say. He showed his letter to the class. The teacher corrected some mistakes.

Then he sent the letter to the newspaper. Do you think they will publish this letter?

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 15 sentences (122 words).

Vocabulary needed:

article, newspaper, journalist, editor

agree, explain, correct, send, publish

Writing:

1. Write a letter about something you see in the newspaper. Explain your opinion. Do you want to send this letter to the editor? Why or why not?

A letter to the editor—Level A

Hassan is an ESL _____ from Iraq. One _____ he read an article about Iraq in _____ newspaper. His _____ asked him, "What did _____ think about this article?"

Hassan said, "Some things in the article are _____ . But some things are _____ true. I don't agree with everything _____ the article. I _____ the journalist doesn't understand."

His teacher said "Why don't you _____ a letter to the editor of the newspaper? _____ can explain your ideas to them." So Hassan wrote a _____ . His _____ helped him think about what to say. _____ showed his letter to the _____ . The _____ corrected some mistakes.

Then _____ sent the letter to _____ newspaper. Do you think _____ will publish this _____ ?

A letter to the editor—Level B

Hassan _____ _____ _____ _____ from Iraq. One day _____ _____ _____ _____ about Iraq _____ _____ newspaper. His teacher _____ _____, "What did you think _____ _____ _____ ?"

Hassan said, "Some things in the article _____ _____. But _____ things _____ _____ _____ . I don't agree _____ _____ in the article. I think the journalist _____ understand."

His teacher _____ "Why don't you _____ _____ _____ to the editor _____ _____ _____ ? You can explain _____ _____ to them." So Hassan _____ _____ _____ . His friends _____ _____ think about what to _____ . He showed his letter _____ _____ _____ . The teacher corrected _____ _____ .

Then he _____ _____ _____ to the newspaper. Do you think they will publish _____ letter?

A letter to the editor—Level C

Hassan _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Iraq. _____ _____ _____ _____ an article _____ Iraq _____ _____ newspaper. _____ _____ _____ _____ , "_____ _____ _____ _____ about this article?"

Hassan said, "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ are true. _____ _____ _____ are not true. _____ _____ _____ _____ everything _____ _____ _____ . I _____ the journalist _____ _____ ."

_____ _____ said "Why don't you _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ newspaper? You can _____ _____ _____ to them." So Hassan _____ _____ _____ . His friends _____ _____ _____ _____ what to _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ to the class. The teacher _____ _____ _____ .

Then _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ newspaper. _____ _____ think _____ _____ publish _____ _____ ?

A letter to the editor—Level D

Hassan ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ Iraq. ____ ____ ____ ____

____ ____ ____ Iraq ____ ____ ____ ____. ____ ____

____ ____, "____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____?"

Hassan ____, "____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____.

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____. ____ ____ ____ ____

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____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____. ____ ____

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____?

A letter to the editor—Level E

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

Advertising

Great stuff in HOE's back issues!

Hands-on English has all of our back issues available (some of the older ones as reprints). That's going on 12 years of useful teaching materials! You can order these for $7 each; order 10 or more and get them for $6 each. See a detailed description of all the back issues on our website at: www.handsonenglish.com/backissues.html

You can order online, by mail, or call us toll free at 1-800- 375-4263. —*H.O.E.*

Heroes from American History; A Content-Based Reader by Anne Siebert and Raymond C. Clark. Sixteen readings for intermediate ESL about the real challenges met and overcome by famous individuals in U.S. history. Integrated skills exercises include maps, timelines, vocabulary, writing and discussion. (This is a companion volume to the *Playbook*.) ISBN 0-86647-143-X, $15.

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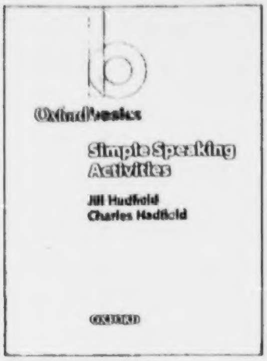
On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials



ISBN 0-19-442169-4.

Oxford Basics by Jill Hadfield and Charles Hadfield. A series that includes: *Simple Listening Activities*, *Simple Speaking Activities*, *Simple Reading Activities* and *Simple Writing Activities*. (Oxford University Press 1999). Each text is about 70 pages and is $6.95. Order from OUP at 1-800-451-7556, www.oup.com/us/esl.

This series of teacher resources is well-suited for new teachers working with beginning level students. The thirty short lesson ideas in each text are simple, 'lo-tech' and easy to do. They are lovely, classic interactive activities from some master teachers in the field of language teaching.

We picked out a few examples to tell you about. In the *Speaking* book, there are some nice interview grids for students to ask each other about likes and dislikes. In an activity to practice colors, students draw six every-day objects on small pieces of paper (like a cup, a pencil, etc.) and color these in their choice of colors. All these pieces of paper are mixed together, then everyone draws six of these each. Now each student tries to retrieve his or her own objects, by asking "Do you have a green cup?" etc., until they've found all of the items. This is simple to prepare, student-centered and fun.

In the *Listening* book, for an activity on directions you draw a simple street map on the board with several places labeled—bank, school, etc. Then the teacher describes how to get somewhere (ie, turn left and it's across from the park) and the students have to listen and figure out what the destination is. This is a nice kind of verbal puzzle.

The *Reading* book has similar little gems. For example, in one activity the students are given a long grocery list, which they have to sort into two lists for two different kinds of meals. Another lesson about body parts has a written description of an alien who someone claims to have seen, with three heads, etc. The students have to read the description and draw a picture of the alien.

In the *Writing* book, as part of a lesson on clothing some students are asked to act out a bank robbery. Then, everyone has to write down what happened, including descriptions of what the robbers were wearing for the police. They compare notes to see if their descriptions are the same.

If you are an experienced ESL teacher, you may feel that you already have a repertoire of these basics. But if you are still looking for ways to involve your beginning students actively, we can highly recommend this easy-to-use resource.

The content of the activities is universal and they are appropriate for any location or cultural group. (In a few places you'll notice idiomatic British expressions like 'flat' for 'apartment'—these are perfectly easy to substitute with North American usage.)

Free citizenship resources

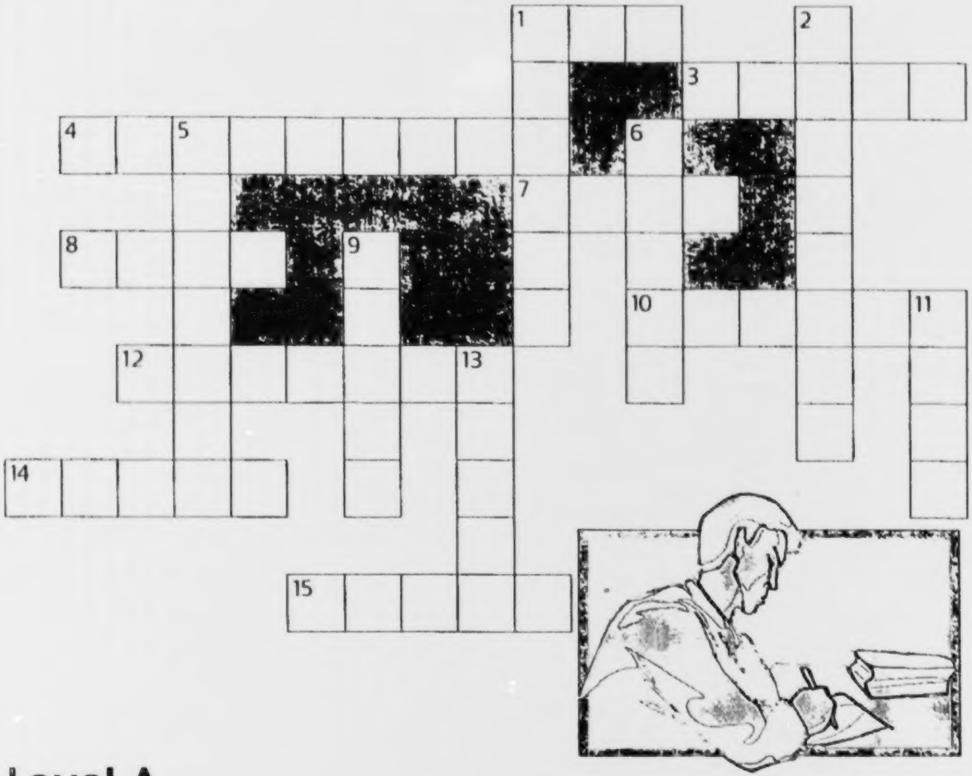
Two very useful resources for citizenship and civics teaching are available ***free*** from the Spring Institute for International Studies ELT Project (sponsored by the Office of Refugee Resettlement).

Bibliography of Citizenship and Civics Texts carefully describes and compares 36 student texts and 5 reference works. An especially useful feature is analysis of the level of English/reading level used in each text. This resource allows you to see which aspects of citizenship are covered in what materials, and what kinds of learning approach is used.

Curriculum for Citizenhip (History, Government & the N-400), prepared May 2002. The History and Government parts of this guide provide cross references to available student materials for each specific question. The N-400 section presents the application process through case studies, which students read, discuss and relate to their own answers. Each of these studies is followed by a reference guide to further information on the topic in student texts. The appendix has 22 pages of practice forms.

If you teach citizenship classes, especially for test preparation, you need both of these resources. To receive these materials, contact ELT by phone at 303-863-0188, by fax at 303-863-0178 or visit their website at <www.springinstitute.org>.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
About writing



Word list

board
computer
copy
correct
dictation
erase
form
letter
message
paper
pen
pencil
read
spell
story
write

Level A

Across clues

1. Bank manager: "Please sign this paper here." Customer: "Sure. Can I borrow a ______?"
3. Student: "I wrote a ______ about my family. Would you like to read it?" Teacher: "Yes, I would."
4. The teacher reads a sentence. The students listen, and write it down. This is a ______.
7. Teacher: "There are four sentences on the board. Read the sentences, then ______ them in your notebook. You can practice reading these at home."
8. Please fill out this ______ with your name, address and phone number.
10. "What are you doing?" "I'm writing a ______ to my cousin in Hong Kong."
12. "Hello, is Maria there?" "No, she isn't. Can I take a _____?"
14. Please ______ your name here at the top of the page.
15. Listen to the question. Then write the answer on your ______.

Down clues

1. If you write with this, you can also erase what you wrote.
2. First I wrote a story. Then I typed it on the ______.
5. "Is this answer right?" "Yes, it's ______."
6. "How do you ______ the word *vehicle*?" "I'm not sure—look in the dictionary."
9. Teacher: "Please go to the ______ and write your sentence so all the students can read it." Student: "O.K."
11. Student A: "Would you like to ______ this story I wrote?" Student B: "Yes, I would."
13. "Would you like to use my pen?" "No, thanks, I prefer to write with a pencil. Then if I make a mistake, I can _____ it."

Level B

Across clues

1. If you write with a _____, you can't erase your writing.
3. Who wrote this _____? It is very interesting. I enjoyed reading it.
4. Teacher: "Please listen and get ready to write. I'm going to give you a ________."
7. After you correct all the mistakes, you should _____ the story again on a new sheet of paper.
8. When you apply for a job, you have to fill out an application ______.
10. I'm going to write a ______ to the President. Can you help me find the address?
12. "I have a ______ for your sister. Is she here today?" "No, but I can give to to her later."
14. After you _______ a story, you can show it to the other students.
15. I'm writing a very long story. I need another piece of _________.

Down clues

1. If you write with a ________, you can erase your writing.
2. If you type your story on a ______, you can print the story out on a printer.
5. I think I have some mistakes in my story. Can you ______ it for me?
6. I can write in English but I don't know how to ______ all the words.
9. Three students wrote their stories on the ______. Everybody could read the stories.
11. Another student gave me her story, but her handwriting is difficult to _____.
13. If you make a spelling mistake, you can _______ the word and write it again.

Level C

Across clues

1. A tool for writing. The writing can be black, blue or red.
3. I wrote a true _______ about something that happened to me last year.
4. You do this in school to practice listening and writing in English.
7. This word means: write the same thing again.
8. This is a paper with many blank spaces for you to write information.
10. After you write this, you can send it in the mail.
12. Yesterday we learned how to send an email _____ with the computer.
14. This word means: put some ideas down on paper.
15. Books, magazines and newspapers are made from ________.

Down clues

1. A tool for writing. The writing looks gray on the paper.
2. To use a word processor for writing, you need a _________.
5. The teacher underlined some mistakes on your paper. Now you have to _____ them.
6. If you don't know how to _____ a word you can look it up.
9. This is a place to write something for the whole class to see.
11. After you finish writing your story, let another student ______ it.
13. This word means: make some writing disappear.

Note to the instructor:

Your students can select which level they'd like to try for this puzzle. Level A is meant to be easiest; Levels B and C are each a little harder.

They can also elect to use the word list as an aid, or not.

Many students like to try all three levels, so have extra copies of the puzzle and clues ready!

Discussion

1. Do you prefer to write with a pen or a pencil? Why?
2. Do you like to write? Why or why not?
3. When you write a letter, who do you send it to?
4. What kinds of writing do you have to do in English?

ESL game:

Q&A cards for oral practice

—Contributed by Walter Klinger, instructor at the Center for Intercultural Education, University of Shiga Prefecture, Hikone, Japan.

This game provides listening and speaking practice in a relaxed and fun setting. Because the students work in groups of 4–6 players, it is suitable for any size class. It is adaptable for most levels from beginners through intermediates.

The object of the game (like that of 'Go Fish' or Rummy) is to see how many matching pairs you can collect. But, instead of asking for the card they are looking for, students must pose a question—the matching card is the one with the correct answer. For example, for a card with "21" on it, the student asks "How much is 3 times 7?"

We've provided an example here with numbers, but in Walter's original game he uses pictures. For example, sets of pictures about clothing, driving (such as street signs), seasons, holidays, weather, illness and medical, shopping, famous people, famous places, events at home, sports, time, objects, phone, school, etc. All you need is a set of sixteen pictures for a topic.

How to prepare

1. Use page layout software to make a 4x4 grid of 16 cards per page (or use the model on the next page).
2. Choose 16 different pictures on one topic and put them on the grid.
3. Photocopy the page so you have 2 of each card.
4. Now make a photocopy of this set of 32 cards (both sheets) for each group of students who will be playing.
5. Cut up the cards and place each set in an envelope. (Students can help with this.)

Presenting the game

1. Show the students the pictures (on the overhead projector if you have a large class) and discuss the vocabulary.
2. Explain that for each card, a student must ask a question. Give some examples. (For beginning students, you can also work on preparing the questions for each picture.)
3. Have the students sit in small groups and distribute the game cards.
4. Explain the rules, then help the students as they get started.

Rules

1. Take out the cards and shuffle them.
2. Deal out all the cards, face down, to the players.
3. Pick up your cards and look at them.
4. You want to collect pairs of matching cards. Check your cards, and pull out any matching pairs.
5. Now, if it is your turn, you ask one question to ONE other player. (You can only ask one person.) Example: "What is 22 minus 1?"
6. If that player has the correct card (21), they give it to you. If they don't have it, they say, "Sorry, I don't have that card."
7. Now it's the next person's turn.
8. Whoever collects the most cards is the winner.

Other Q&A games

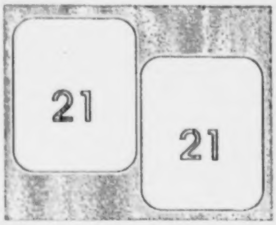
Time: Use clocks showing different times. Students make questions using the time, for example "What were you doing at 3:00 p.m. yesterday?" "Can I call you tomorrow at noon?"

Traffic signs: Pretend you are a passenger in a car. You see this sign and say something about it to the driver. "Be careful! There is a deer crossing here!" Or, "Slow down, the speed limit is only 35 mph!" Or, "You can't park here, this is handicapped parking only!"

Objects: Talk about something you want to do, and what you need. For example, "I want to clean the floor. Where is the mop and bucket?" Or, "I want to mail a letter. Do you have a stamp?"

Game vocabulary

Shuffle. Deal. Whose deal? It's your deal. It's your turn to deal.
Are we playing clockwise or counter-clockwise?
Let's begin. Whose turn is it? It's my turn.
You already asked me that question!
Could you repeat the question, please?
Is this the right card?
I'm out. I have no questions. Pass.
Drat! Darn! Rats! Heck! Yay!
Let's play again. Let's play a different way.



Question: "What is 22 minus 1?"

Answer: "I don't have a card with 21." or, "It's 21. Here's the matching card."

This game is a much-simplified version of Walter's activity and we thank him very much for allowing us to adapt it. If you would like to get more details and ideas for using the game, plus cards ready for downloading, visit his website at www2.ice.usp.ac.jp/wklinger/QA/wkgames/qacards/q&a.htm

He has other card games there as well, look for his Card Games Home, or go to:

www2.ice.usp.ac.jp/wklinger/qa/cardgameshome.htm

21	65	18	16
1	99	1,000	10
80	13	105	22
40	3	27	12

Dear Abbie:
Speaking comprehensibly

Dear Abbie,

How can I help an ESOL student to speak slower? A student in my organization is a very motivated and excited English speaker, and often speaks so fast that we can't understand her. I realize that people in many other countries speak a great deal faster than we do. Can you point me to some good techniques to use?

Melinda Chilson
Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse,
Syracuse, NY.

Abbie responds:

I assume from your question that the student is not a beginner. She may have been taught that speaking English quickly is a sign that she speaks the language well. She needs to learn to balance speed against the importance of being understood. As an ESL teacher, I have to do the same thing.

In addition to speed, stress and intonation can also interfere with comprehension. In India, in parts of Africa and in other countries where English has been used as a second or third language for many years, people have developed their own dialects of English. Language that is correct and accepted in that context may have patterns of intonation that Americans aren't used to. English speakers from such countries may need to make modifications in their speech in order to be understood by Americans.

I think there are two aspects to working on this: raising awareness of the problem and modeling and practicing to correct it.

Raising awareness

With intermediate and advanced students: talk about the issue of being understood. You could start with a list of statements to which students respond "I agree" or "I disagree." You can write the statements on the board or dictate them. After students respond, have them compare their answers in pairs; then talk about it with the whole class.

Here are some possible statements:

- I can understand my teacher.
- My teacher can understand me.
- I can understand my classmates.
- My classmates can understand me.
- I speak faster than my classmates.
- I speak more slowly than my classmates.
- It's the speaker's responsibility to be understood.
- It's the listener's responsibility to understand.
- In order to make myself understood I need to __________.

This kind of activity makes all of the students more aware of the importance of making themselves understood.

Modeling and practice

Have students dictate to a partner or to the whole class. For example, students might dictate to their phone numbers or addresses, including spelling the street name. The speaker can see immediately if she is understood. I often follow up on such dictations by having students read a number or an address to me and I write it on the board. If I can't do it, it's a clear indication to the student that she's not communicating.

Abbie Tom and students pose for a class photo. (Not sure which one is Abbie? By coincidence, she's the one sitting closest to the plate of brownies.)

—by **Abbie Tom**, ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

*Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at **Hands-on English** and we will pass these along to her. Thank you!*

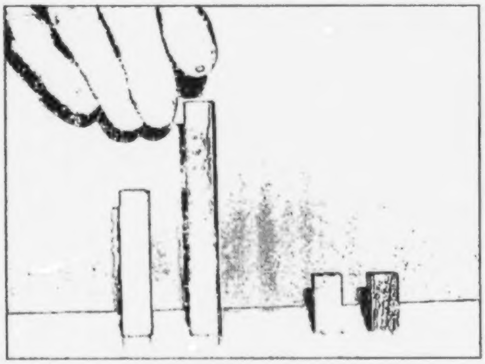
Carolyn Graham's "Jazz Chants" are an excellent way to practice speed, stress and intonation while, at the same time, students are practicing useful language. Because everybody is speaking, students can practice without feeling exposed. You set the pace, thus slowing down those who speak too fast. You also model stress and intonation, contrasting, for example, yes/no and wh-questions. I usually do a jazz chant the first time without any analysis; I just have my students repeat after me. Later (I revisit each jazz chant on several different class days) we might look at specific features.

Dialogs have become somewhat unfashionable, but I think they can be very useful, especially for set phrases representing what students actually need to say (such as basic phone conversations, greetings, or leave-taking). As with the jazz chants, students don't have to think about how to say something and can instead concentrate on pronunciation following your model.

Students' recordings of themselves, especially when they are just talking (rather than reading aloud), provide useful feedback, especially if the student listens to the recording for specific things (speed or intonation, for example). This is particularly suited for one-on-one tutors.

Tools & techniques:

Visual cues for pronunciation



Here the teacher is demonstrating the correct pronunciation for the word "emergency." Note that the second syllable is not only stressed (higher) but is also longer in duration, as indicated by the space after it.

These rods are available at teacher's supply stores, or you might ask to borrow a set from an elementary school teacher. They have many other language teaching uses! ESL teachers have used these to teach prepositions, to demonstrate grammar and sentence structure, to practice questions and commands, and even for map activities.

Here's a another technique you can use for students who need help with emphasis, intonation, stress and correct phrasing.

Use colored blocks such as the "Cuisenaire rods" used by elementary school teachers for math concepts. These have a dozen or so different colors in rods of different sizes. (You can also use LEGO blocks for this purpose.)

The blocks can be arranged in a row to signify the words or syllables in a sentence. You can show the student by pointing where the problem is. The student can then use the pieces as a guide for repeating the model correctly.

To indicate correct phrasing in a sentence, you can separate groups of blocks/words from each other and point to each group as you model the phrase. When the students try it, they have not only your verbal model to follow but the grouped blocks as a visual reminder.

Why it works

Sometimes reading the printed word actually interferes with correct listening and pronunciation. Focusing instead on a non-text visual cue can be a big help.

Tools & techniques:
Stories with sounds

Tape adds drama

Incorporating holidays into my lesson plans gave a boost to the energy quotient of my students. When starting writing assignments with your students (whether you are a classroom teacher or a tutor, like me), consider making a cassette tape, complete with spooky sound effects, for your students to keep or to compile into a class tape for future students to enjoy. This idea works at any time of the year, but Halloween is an especially good subject with the variety of sound effects it offers.

For this project, you will need a cassette tape. If you are a tutor, you might ask your student to provide one if you plan on giving it to him/her after the project is finished. If you teach in a classroom and have trouble finding tapes, ask your local library or college library for old cassette tapes. Old tapes can still be usable, but I suggest you test them beforehand by recording your voice and listening to the tape's quality.

How to do it

1) Prior to Halloween, I asked my students to write a story. Some used Halloween as the theme, others wrote about different subjects. After corrections, I encouraged them to look for places in their stories where sound effects might be appropriate.

2) After finding parts in their stories where sound effects would work, I demonstrated a few sound effects for them (see list below). This was provided as a means for them to start looking at their environments in new ways...could we use that frying pan? How about a little sister's music box or the zipper on a backpack?

3) After trying out various sound effects, we made notes in the story so the timing would work as we recorded. We then rehearsed the story, complete with sound effects. I recommend having your students read a sentence first, then do its sound effect. If your student tries to read while they do the sound effect, the voice often gets muffled or the student loses his/her place in the story.

4) After your student feels comfortable reading the words and making the actual sound effects (this can be cumbersome, especially if you have props involved), begin recording the story on a cassette tape. In making the recording, let your students control the session as much as possible. You can always pause the tape, get ready, make the sound effect, and then re-start the tape to start reading again. Don't try to continually record—your student may get flustered, and if you move around too much with the tape recorder, you'll hear it on the tape. Consider re-recording a spot if a mishap occurs.

5) When you're finished, light a candle, dim the lights, and invite others to hear the story at your 'premiere'. If you're a classroom teacher, you can encourage your students to make tickets to distribute. If you're a tutor, invite the family to come around the tape recorder to listen.

I encourage you to be creative with your sound effects. You might set a limit on how many effects your student(s) can use during their taping so things go smoothly. After playing the tape, keep it as a resource, or make a copy for your student(s) if you have the equipment. You might also have a volunteer do this.

Sound suggestions for your tapes:

- For a waterfall or whitewater rapids: turn on a bathtub faucet full force
- For an ocean, pond, lake, river, or to make a swimming sound: fill a sink or basin (a bathtub works well, too) with a couple inches of water. Use your hand to splash the water as you record. Or, fill bottles halfway with water, and shake hard.
- For an airplane: turn on a hair dryer
- For walking or running sounds: put your hands in heeled shoes on a table and walk them across the surface
- For walking in nature, on a trail, or on the beach: crunch cereal (keep it in its bag) with your hands
- For a rainstorm: record static from a radio or TV
- For wind: blow across the microphone

Other actual sounds include: doorbell, telephone, car engine, computer keyboard, scissors cutting paper, speaking into an electric fan to distort the voice. ☚

Contributed by ***Susan Gavin****, ESL instructor/tutor in the Chicago, Illinois area.*

Here is a list of typical Halloween sound words. These might be a good starting point for introducing Halloween cards and customs to your adult students. It might also be a springboard to a lesson on other sound words in English.

Sound words: bang, whoosh, slam, crash, slither, whoo, eek, boo, thud, creak, tinkle, screech, howl...

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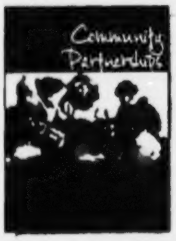

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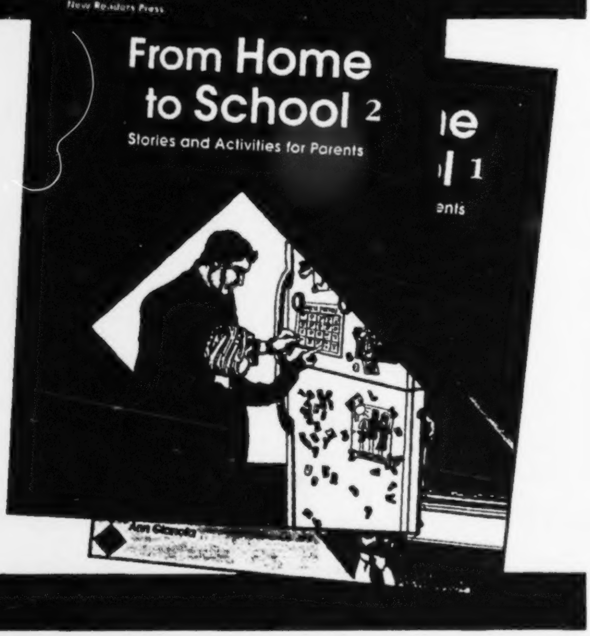

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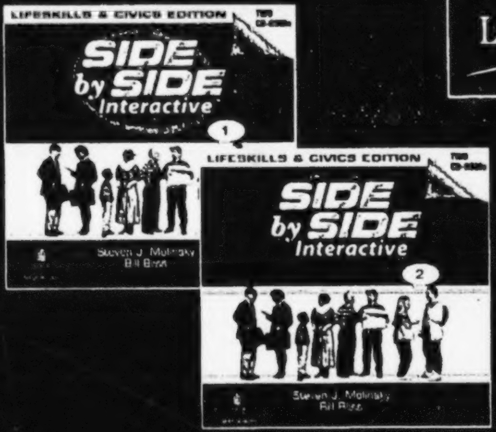
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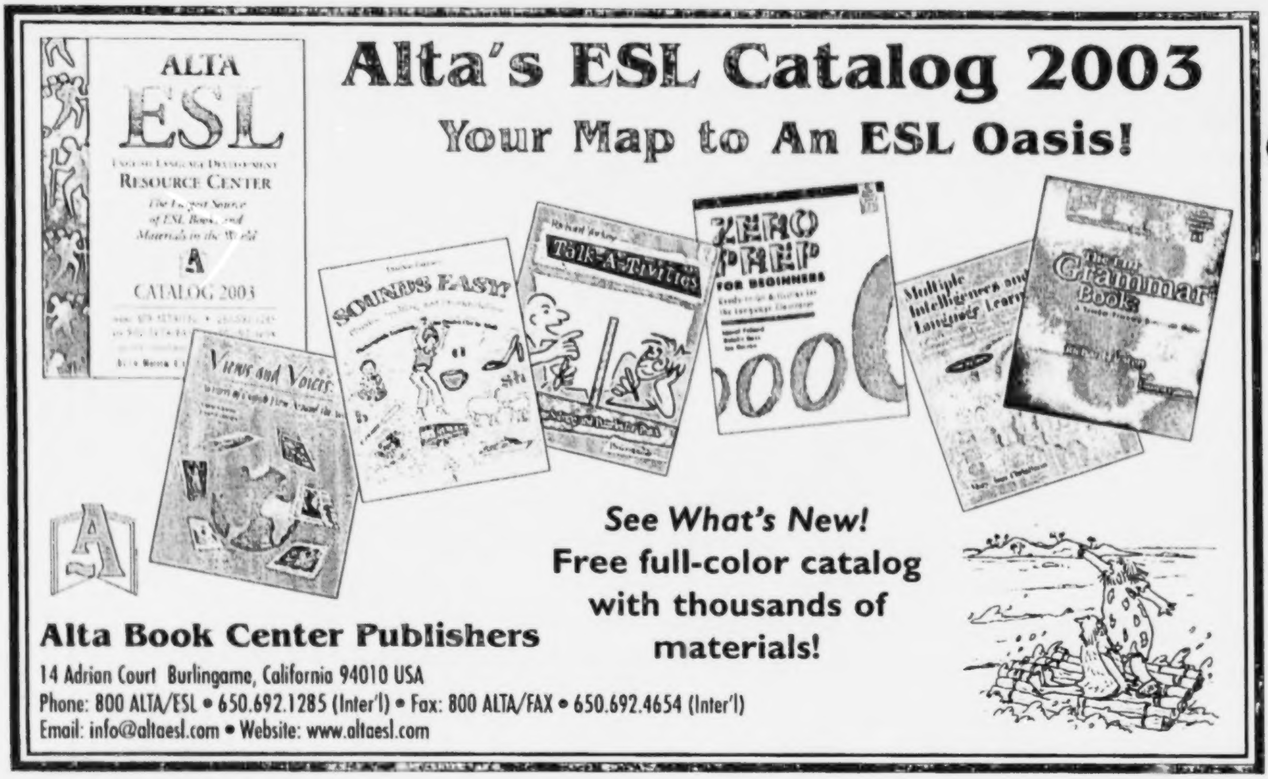

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Fall is football season in the U.S., and last year we published a reading/multi-level dictation on this 'cultural' topic. See "Football season" in Vol. 11, No. 3. For other traditional fall customs see "Changes for fall", a multi-level puzzle in Vol. 10, No. 3.

Learning strategies are worth discussing in the fall, to help your students think about how best to study. We have a reading/dictation activity, "How to learn English" that was very popular for this purpose. See Vol. 9, No. 3.

When you have new students working together for the first time, it's always good to think about developing a good 'classroom community' that is conducive to learning. You'll find 13 tips on creating community in the classroom in Vol. 8, No. 3.

Activities that help students get to know one another include interviews. We've published many interview forms over the years; two examples are 'Information charts' in Vol. 11, No. 2 and 'Interviews galore!' in Vol. 5, No. 4. For thoughtful interaction in writing, you might also try a student-to-student writing exercise like the one described in Vol. 7, No. 1. And don't forget games, which have the dual purpose of providing relaxed practice in English and building relationships among the participants. Some laughter will bring your students together and promote learning.

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Volume 12, Number 4 November/December 2002

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Mutual benefits

As I'm writing this, it is still uncertain whether there will be a war, or perhaps the uncertainty is when. Other things up in the air include terrorism, school budgets, immigration policies and more. As one person you can feel about as helpless as a grain of sand, and all you can do is watch.

A colleague told us that to avoid worrying too much about world events, she focuses instead on "my lovely students." It does indeed seem that the personal connections we have with our students, and with others, have become even more valuable. Working together on something constructive, even for an hour, brings out the best in people and gives us all a feeling of accomplishment.

We've been telling our readers for years how important you and your teaching and tutoring work is for students and their families. Of course you know this already, but it helps to be reminded and we hope it helps that *Hands-on English*, at least, appreciates what you are doing.

Now suddenly, in scary times, we realize how important the students are to us. We need them to help remind us of what's good in human nature and to keep us connected to the outside world. Many of them, as survivors, can teach us by example how to cope with stressful events, how to keep things in perspective and how to live life with humor and optimism.

While we're teaching, let's let them teach us how to continue.

In this issue

There is quite a variety of activities in this issue and we hope you will find some of these useful for your students. We've included many hints & tips (p. 4) about **holiday season** activities for you to consider. To go along with these, there is a nice listening and speaking activity (p. 6) about shopping for a **greeting card**.

Our 'Dear Abbie' provides some answers to the question of how to include **reviewing** in adult ESL lessons. As usual, she provides some practical advice and example lessons (see page 8).

Our multi-level crossword puzzle is about **household appliances**, with a nifty 'drawing dictation' on page 12 to follow up. Speaking of appliances, answering machines are everywhere and they pose a problem to our students. See page 14 for a lesson on a **recorded message**, with a multi-level dictation to help the students study this important form of communication.

If there is one thing I could point to in this issue that really delights me, it's the "Young and old" **conversation activity** sent to us by Elizabeth Bakker (p. 7). I feel grateful and inspired that she would send us this little gem. It makes me want to continue my work, with humor and optimism. Thank you!

I hope all of our readers will feel invited to share activities with us—we look forward to hearing from you.

Peace, good will, and happy teaching!

—the Editor.

Hands-on English

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

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You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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See you there!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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About our Mini-grants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

Have a great New Year!

"I'd like to wish all our readers a successful conclusion to 2002, much rest over the holidays, and renewed spirit next year!"

—Anna Silliman, your Editor.

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12-4

Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Some hellos. . .

"Thank you, Anna and colleagues, for providing such a valuable resource to us and our students over the years! HOE is a gem!"

—Mary Romney
Quinebaug Valley CC, Willimantic, CT

"I look forward to every issue. I love all the practical suggestions and teaching tips in H.O.E."

—Jane Kleindienst
Scottsdale, AZ

"This newsletter is a treat for me and I look forward to its arrival. Thank you."

—Lina Crocker
Lexington, KY

"Thanks! We get a lot out of your ESL teaching tips. Keep up the good work."

—Karen Patschke
Park Street Church, Boston, MA

"Finally today I am taking time to thank you again for your publication. Our staff always looks forward to a new copy and we keep the old ones on file and refer to them often. Any time I get a new teacher, I show them where we keep our library of *Hands-on English*.

"Many thanks from the Special Programs staff of Crete Public Schools!"

—Jan Sears, Crete, NE

. . .& a goodbye

"I've retired and won't be renewing this year. Thanks for all your help over the years!"

—Jean Losinger
Pittsford, NY

Editor's note: Jean's been a subscriber since September of 1992—omigosh, that's ten years! It feels like a member of the family is leaving us!

We've known some teachers to 'retire,' then take up some tutoring at a later point because they miss the students. What is it about ESL? So, we'll hope to hear from former readers again some day. . .

Needs ideas for speaking

"I am currently tutoring a Korean doctor and his wife. Both are very well educated in their own language, and read and comprehend English to a high school and above level. Both have difficulty speaking spontaneously, and with word retrieval. Any suggestions?

"I have been a second grade teacher for forty years and have never tutored adults before, nor attempted to teach English before. Any suggestions for materials which might be helpful? Thank you."

—Dorothy Patti, Somers, NY

Editor's note: Have you considered using picture stories as a basis for speaking practice? I know that normally we think of these as beginning-level material, because they provide a non-text structure from which beginners and literacy level students can work on writing skills. But picture stories can also provide a non-text structure for advanced students—an intermediate step between relying on written text (which they are accustomed to) and totally unstructured speaking.

Take a look at "Picture Stories" and "More Picture Stories" by Ligon and Tannenbaum. These are classics, published by Longman and also available from Alta Book Center (see their ad on page 20). I think these are sophisticated enough to provide a starting point for further conversation as well.

Do any of our readers have suggestions for working with this type of student? We'd appreciate any input!

Index to HOE articles?

"Is there an index that covers all issues? An index by topic or kind of activity would be especially helpful."

—Lynette Bowen, Plainview, TX

We do provide an index on our website. It's a PDF file which you can download to your computer. Then you use the "Find..." feature to look for any key word or topic. The listings give you a brief description of each activity and where to find it. We try to keep this index fairly up to date. To get this, go to: www.handsonenglish.com/longindex.html

Hints & tips

With input from numerous readers, we've collected some ideas that might inspire your end-of-the-year lessons. In particular, we were looking for suggestions for holiday activities. Here is what we came up with:

Holiday or not?

Don't feel that you *must* do holiday activities with your students just because it's that time of year. Holiday topics are very useful for familiarizing new arrivals with the customs in this country, and for providing an opportunity for cross-cultural sharing. But consider the goals of your students—if they are already familiar with customs here, have other opportunities for sharing and are working toward a goal such as an entrance exam or applying for a job, then holiday activities may seem silly or distracting. It might be better to keep to regular course work in that case.

You can still have some fun even in a task-oriented environment by inserting some holiday examples into the instructional material. For example, a grammar exercise about Santa Claus, a math activity about a Christmas-tree farmer, a conversation activity about difficult winter weather, a reading from newspaper articles about local charitable organizations, etc.

The theme of giving

Several well-known stories explore the idea of giving. Abbie Tom likes to share "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry with her students. The story is about gifts of love. She wrote a very simple, one-page version for the students to read and discuss. The students then talk about a special gift that they gave or received at some time. After telling their own story she asks them to write about it.

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is about an ungenerous man who learns through a series of dreams that his actions are hurting others and hurting himself. When he decides to change he heals the damage by learning to enjoy giving. There are many retellings of this story and several different film versions. The story could be simplified enough for a short retelling, and even staged as a classroom drama.

Dottie Shattuck, a teacher in North Carolina, wrote: "I always share my family's traditions for Christmas, which include Operation Christmas Child (a shoe box filled with gift items for a child in another country). In 2000, my class so liked the idea that they decided to fill a box—they filled four!"

Cross-cultural exchange

Dottie also told us: "Because I usually have 10 to 15 countries represented in my classes, I'm developing a 'Holidays in December' lesson. This includes Ramadan (when it falls in December), Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. I make a big chart on the board where we can list and compare the origins, activities, colors, and other aspects of the holidays (music or not; service to others, etc.). The Africans are surprised and interested in Kwanzaa."

For useful lesson ideas and stories about Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year's, Chinese New Year and others, Dottie highly recommends *The ESL Teacher's Holiday Activities Kit* by Elizabeth Claire (1990 Center for Applied Research in Education), available from Alta Book Center at www.altaesl.com.

Another reproducible resource book is the *International Holiday & Festival Primer*, Books One and Two by DeRocco, Dundas & Zimmerman (1996 Full Blast Productions), available at www.fullblastproductions.com. This material has lengthier, more advanced readings on 50 different special days in many cultures.

For a cross-cultural lesson, Abbie likes to have her students talk about their favorite holiday (this could be a holiday in their home country). She sometimes has the students draw a picture to represent that holiday before they start talking. Having something in hand as a reference makes talking easier, she says. They change partners and tell the story again, so they get to practice two or three times. Then they have a chance to write about this and share it with the rest of the class.

Listen and do

Included in the Elizabeth Claire book mentioned above is also one of Dottie's favorite activities—a step-by-step procedure for cutting paper snowflakes. This is a great listening exercise. Other 'operations'-type activities relating to the season might be stringing popcorn, baking cookies, wrapping a package. You can do these as listening comprehension exercises with the whole class. Or if you've written the process down, have the students read the steps and put them in the correct order, or have students giving the instructions to each other.

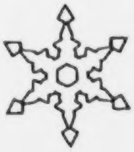
Food

Many programs have special food events or lessons relating to food at this time of year. Jean Hanslin wrote to us from Saint Paul, Minnesota about her program's lessons on special-occasion foods. She says: "It seems as if in our thematic curriculum there is often a lesson or two revolving around the origin of eating customs, the names of the ingredients and the finished product, recipe deciphering, direction giving, actual preparation, tasting, describing, and comparing to foods and customs from other countries. Often an experience story, complete with digital photos and captions, serves as a natural, literacy follow-up. We have found these lessons to be motivating and appreciated by all levels of learners." And why not? Everybody loves food, and it's easier to learn new language when you're talking about something you enjoy.

Publish a book?—A popular year-end project is to collect recipes the students have contributed into a booklet for everyone to take home. The students get involved not only with the food but also with the explaining, editing and publishing process.

Group cooking project?—We published a lesson in Hands-on English on how to make a pumpkin pie (Vol. 2, No. 4). This traditional food seems appropriate for Thanksgiving and any fall or winter festivities. Abbie Tom says she tells her students to buy a pre-made crust because that simplifies the process quite a bit.

A student dinner?—Some classes like to organize a dinner together, where the students each bring dishes they've prepared. This seems especially appropriate when the students have been working hard and have something to celebrate. It's great if the students do all the organizing for this type of event. This brings out the best in everyone; perhaps it's that spirit of giving.



Discussions

There are some issues that always come up at this time of year. You'll hear about them on TV or see articles in magazines and newspapers—it would be interesting to discuss some of these with your students.

For example, you'll read about how to avoid stress over the holidays. Why are holidays stressful? Is this true in other cultures too? What kind of advice do the students have for this problem?

Because there is a lot of travel at this time of year, you'll see numerous stories on travel safety, how to be prepared for driving conditions, dressing warmly, etc. It might be useful to point these items out to your students and ask if they have experiences to relate or advice for newcomers about winter weather in your area.

It seems that the issue of homeless people only gets into the news around the holidays. Often news programs will feature the work of homeless shelters and report on the need for donations of clothes and food to charities. Which groups and agencies are trying to help with this problem?

Finally, the end of the year is a time for report cards and parent-teacher conferences. Your local paper may report on how the schools are doing. If your students have children in school, they might like to share their opinions and experiences.

Speaking activity:

Shopping for a greeting card

'Strip story' for listening and speaking

You may be familiar with the 'strip story' technique that is a golden oldy of ESL lessons. It challenges your students to put together the pieces of a story in the correct order, but they have to do this entirely by listening, and they can't look at the strips to solve the puzzle!

How to do it

Have your students sit in groups of 4 to 5 students each. If necessary, the groups can be larger. For each group, have a copy of this story already cut up into strips and shuffled (you can give it to them in an envelope).

Tell the students they should each draw out one or two strips, until all the strips are distributed among the group. However, these are TOP SECRET and they may not show these to anyone else in the group! Ask the students to read the sentences to themselves. Provide some individual help if there is anything they don't understand.

Next, have the students read their sentences aloud to the rest of the group. Now ask them if they can put the sentences in the correct order to make a story. To do this, they should read their sentences aloud again, but they can't show the strips to each other.

Allow plenty of time for this exercise because it can be difficult. Once the students agree on the order, have them read the story aloud to see if it is correct.

Follow up

As a final step, all the students can write the story as a dictation, with each student dictating his or her own sentence to the group. To correct the dictation they can then pass the strips around the group.

Karin wanted to send a card to a friend.

So, on Saturday she went to the shopping mall.

She found a store that sells greeting cards.

She looked at many cards that said "Merry Christmas," "Happy Birthday" and "Thinking of You."

The most beautiful card said "Season's Greetings."

Karin decided to buy this card.

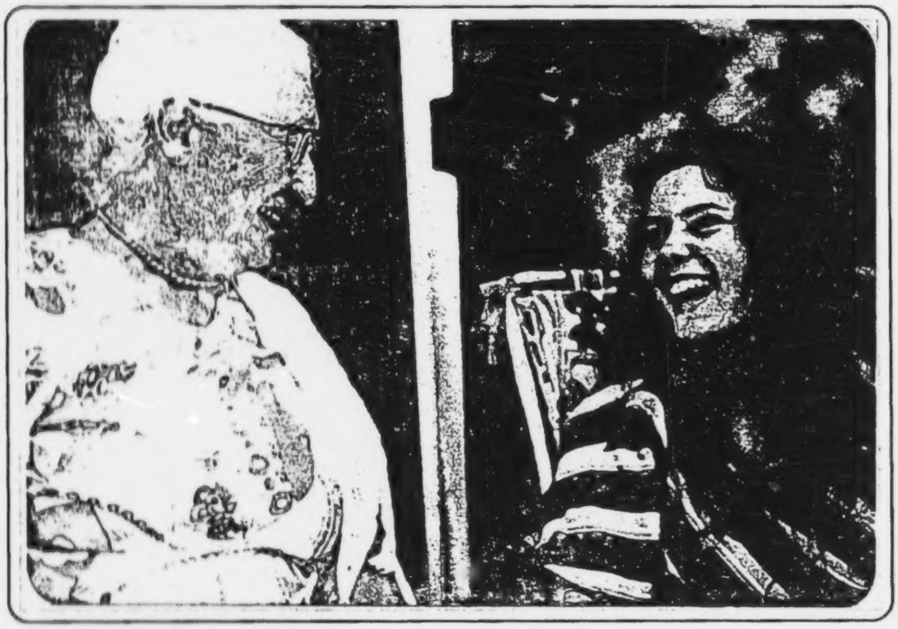
She paid the sales clerk and went home to write to her friend.

Conversation activity:
Young and old

Contributed by ***Elizabeth Bakker****, Downey Adult School, in Downey, California.*

We received this letter from Elizabeth Bakker: "I am enclosing a lesson I did with my students on Friday. It was very successful! Actually the person in the picture is me at age 19 with my grandmother. I am now 46 years old, so the students were a bit surprised. On my handout I wrote the questions by hand rather than typing, so it looked more personal."

We thought that you and your students might enjoy discussing this topic as well. Part of the magic of this exercise is in the sharing of something real—if you can share something about yourself like this with your students you may open up some wonderful communication! We can imagine that students will want to share their own photos in response to this one.



1. Who is in the picture?
2. What is good about being young?
3. What is good about being old?
4. What do you think they are laughing about in the picture?
5. Do you think it is good for old people to be around young people? Why?
6. What can older people teach us about life?
7. What can young people teach us about life?
8. Do you know anyone who is old? What can you tell us about them?
9. What are some advantages of being young?
10. What are some advantages of being old?

Dear Abbie:
How to include review in lessons

Recently, a teacher new to ESL asked us "What are some ways to incorporate review into my lessons? I think review is important, but often students who are present weren't there for a previous lesson. Do you have any ideas?" We passed this question along to Abbie, and here's her response:

Reviewing in adult classes is important for several reasons. First, some students are not able to come to class every day because of work, child care, transportation and other problems. Reviewing gives them a chance to see what they've missed. When you know that everybody is 'on the same page,' you can go on. Second, there may be several days between classes. Reviewing gives students a chance to recall what they learned and to show what they remember. Those who didn't understand completely have another chance. Many people use those days between classes to process what they learned. Reviewing lets them confirm their understanding. Finally, reviewing gives all the students a chance to see what they've accomplished, which is very important in a long-term learning effort like learning a language.

I think of two kinds of review; long-range review covering several days, a week, a unit, or maybe even a semester, and short-range review which is from one day to the next.

Long-range strategies

In my high beginner class I give my students a blank calendar each month. We go over it at the beginning of the month, filling in the days of the week and the dates (a good chance to review ordinal numbers). We also put in birthdays and holidays. The rest of the space in each square is used for new vocabulary. Each day the students can write down any new words they want to remember. Once a week, I ask them to tell me what they have written. I write their words on the board and we review both the meaning and the context where they were encountered. At the end of the month I ask them to choose those words they think are most important.

In the same class, I ask my students to fill out a learner's log every Monday. It looks like this:

Weekly learner's log

In class last week—

Some things I learned:

Some things I didn't understand:

Some things I liked:

Some things I didn't like:

Some things I want to study:

Some things I need help with:

Outside of class last week—

I spoke English (where? to whom?)

I listened to English

I read English

I wrote in English

Abbie's students fill out this feedback sheet once a week.

This not only helps them review what they have learned, but it gives me feedback on their learning.

Recycle, recycle

Another kind of review is that which goes on from one class to the next. If we learn some vocabulary picture cards on Monday, for example, on Tuesday the students might quiz each other on them by way of review. On Wednesday the whole class might review by hearing definitions of the words (e.g., it's a long yellow fruit) and holding up the appropriate card (banana). On Thursday the same definitions might be used as cues for bingo.

Retelling is key

When reviewing reading material, I often use some variant of retelling. At its simplest, members of the class tell what they learned. If a lot of students were absent (as happens, for example, when our local schools have teacher workdays), each student who was there can tell a partner who wasn't there about the lesson. You can put some words or questions on the board as reminders.

If we read a story, I have the students retell it in their own words (not looking at the original). If the story is on a tape, I play

—by Abbie Tom,
ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

*Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at **Hands-on English** and we'll pass it along to her. Thank you!*

the tape first to help them remember it. Then I write the story on the board as they retell it. This is similar to a 'language experience' activity, but I usually do make grammar corrections as I transcribe their speech to the board, or at the very least I pause and ask students to make corrections. This is also a chance to model paragraph writing. I sometimes extend this activity by erasing every 4th or 5th word (a 'cloze' comprehension exercise) and then have students come to the board and fill in the blanks.

Retelling can also take the form of group story writing. Each small group writes the story together in their own words, perhaps using pictures as their cues. Then all the stories are posted on the wall and the class as a whole reads them one by one. We compare the stories and discuss features we like in each. This is a good opportunity for some brief grammar lessons as well.

Techniques for rethinking

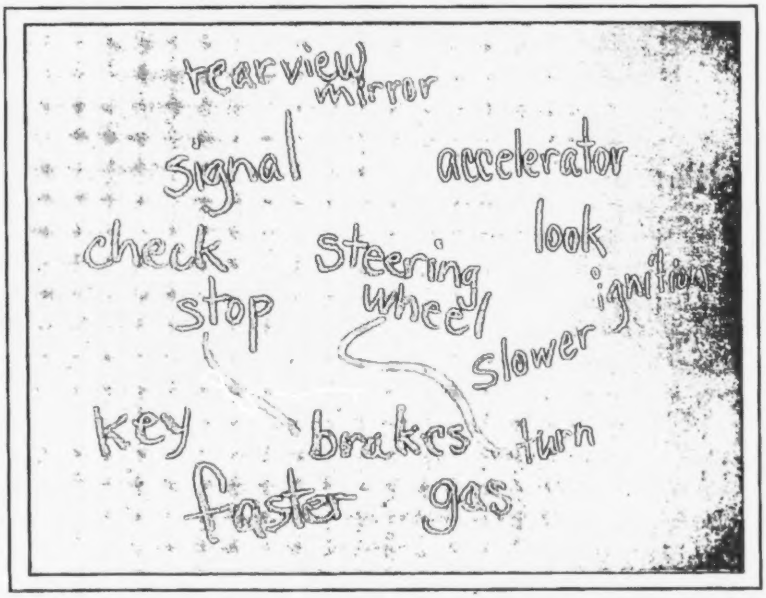
There are many other ways to review. For example, ask students to react to something they did the day before (agree/ disagree, liked/ didn't like). This can be done orally or in writing.

You can carry over some exercises from the previous class and talk about these. For example, students can answer questions about what they studied. They can organize the information from a previous lesson into pros and cons or into lists such as different categories. One of my favorite review activities is to put words from the topic on the board (not in one column, but scattered) and have the students draw lines between related words. This forces them to remember the material and think about it in a new way.

"That's not true..."

Another favorite review activity, and one which is very easy to prepare and do, is to select 6–8 sentences from a reading the students have worked on previously. Change half of the sentences so they are not true. Dictate all of the sentences. Have students write them on the board and check for accuracy. Then go over the sentences and decide which are true and which are false. The class can suggest ways to make the false statements true.

If you think of reviewing as recycling old material in new ways, you'll find many effective techniques to do so.



Here's an example of a 'scattered vocabulary' exercise for review. The vocabulary here is from a previous lesson on driving. The students take turns drawing lines between any words that are connected, and explain how the meanings are related.

Student-prepared review material

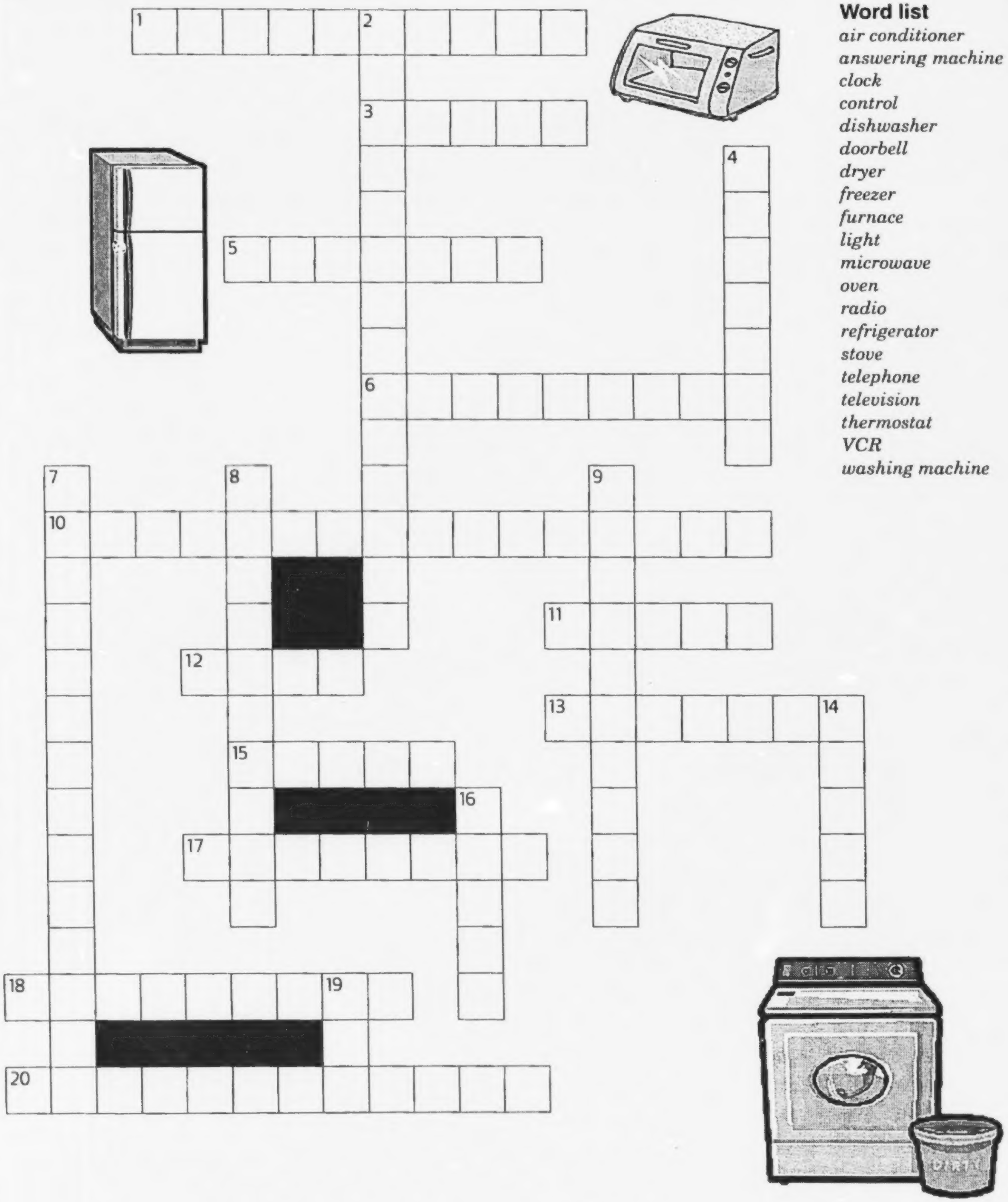
For a great way to review an entire three months of class work, see "A REAL test of student learning" by Fiona Armstrong in Vol. 4, No. 4 of *Hands-on English*.

In this exercise, the students carefully look through the material they have worked on and prepare their own test questions. They work in small groups, with each group responsible for one topic.

When the questions are ready, they are compiled and printed up into a test many pages long. The students each get a copy and they work on these both in class and at home.

Everyone goes over the answers together. Finally, the same questions are used in an oral test, with the students checking each others' answers.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Household appliances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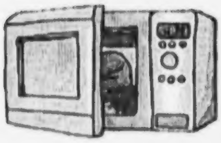
washing machine

Crossword: Household appliances, cont'd. . .

Level A



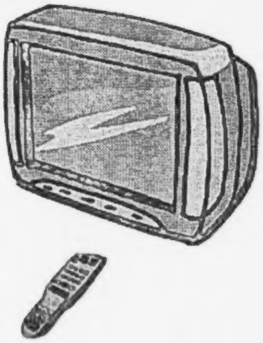
Across clues

1. Mother: "Susa, please unload the _____ and put the dishes away." Daughter: "Okay, Mom."
3. At my workplace we listen to the ____ all day.
5. "My apartment is cold because the ____ isn't working." "You should call the landlord right away."
6. "We had a ____ call last night at midnight." "Who was it?" "I don't know, it was a wrong number."
10. If you call the school, you will hear a recorded message on an _________ instead of a person.
11. "When I finished the laundry I had 5 socks instead of 6." "Maybe one sock is still in the ____."
12. At Thanksgiving, some people bake a turkey in the ______.
13. Sister: "Please change the channel, I don't like this program." Brother: "I can't. I lost the remote ______ !"
15. "Is your ____ gas or electric?" "It's gas, but the oven is electric."
17. Visitor A: "I think no one is home here." Visitor B: "Maybe the ____ is broken. Let's knock on the door."
18. "Do you like to cook in a ____?" "No, I don't. I prefer to cook on the stove."
20. "What do we have to eat?" "I made some soup last night. It's in the _____."

Down clues

2. "In the summer, I can't sleep very well." "Why, because it's so hot?" "No, because the _______ is so noisy."
4. We made some traditional foods from my country last weekend. We put these in the ____ to keep for a party.
7. "Does your apartment have a ____?" "No, but there is a laundry room in the basement."
8. Dad: "Where are the kids?" Mom: "I told them to go outside and play, but they are in the house watching ______."
9. It's so cold today! I turned the _____ to 70 degrees but it still feels cold.
14. When you read a book you should sit near a ______.
16. "What time is it?" "I'm not sure. This ___ needs a new battery."
19. "I have a video of my daughter's wedding. Would you like to see it?" "Not today, I have a doctor's appointment." "You can borrow the video and watch it at home on your _____." "Thanks!"

Level B



Across clues

1. You can clean plates, cups and silverware in this machine.
3. You can listen to the ____ for news or music.
5. In the winter you need this to keep your home warm.
6. If someone calls you, you will hear the ____ ring.
10. If you call me when I'm not home, you can leave a message on my __________.
11. After you wash your clothes, you can put them in this machine.
12. You can bake food inside this appliance.
13. You can use a remote _____ to change the TV channel.
15. You can cook food on top of this appliance.
17. If someone is coming to visit, you will hear this when they arrive.
18. You can heat up some food in this small appliance.
20. Your food will stay cold in this appliance.

Down clues

2. If it's hot in the summer, this appliance will keep your home cool.
4. You can keep ice and frozen food in here.
7. You need this appliance to do your laundry.
8. You can watch the news on _________.
9. This is a controller to make your home warmer or cooler.
14. If you turn this on, you can see at night.
16. You can look at this to see what time it is.
19. You can play a video tape with this machine.

Vocabulary practice: "Put the fridge next to the window"

Thanks to Abbie Tom for suggesting this exercise!

A drawing dictation

Here's a chance for your students to review vocabulary about household appliances and practice directions at the same time.

Have the students work in pairs. First ask them to make a list of appliances or other items they might put into a kitchen. (You can refer to the puzzle on page 10 as a starting point.) Make sure all the students know what these are.

Next, give each student a copy of the blank kitchen diagram. Ask them to sit so that they can't see each other's picture. If necessary, stand a file folder or a notebook up between the students to block the view.

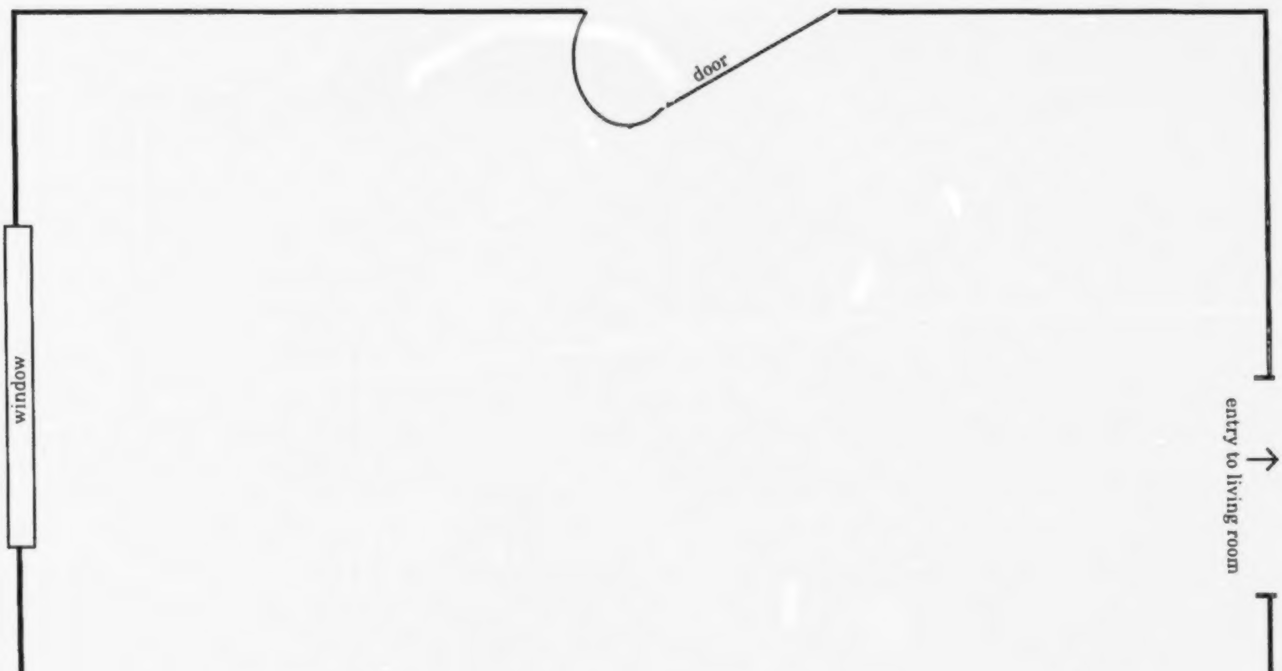
Now the first student will describe where to put each appliance, and they will both draw as they go along. The second student listens and draws, and may ask questions if he or she doesn't understand the instructions. When they are finished, the students can compare their drawings. Ideally, both drawings will be the same! If not, the students should discuss the differences and describe the corrections.

You may decide that your students need a demonstration of this activity first, before they start the pairwork. If so, begin by handing each student a blank diagram and give instructions to the whole class at the same time. Following this model the students can repeat the exercise in pairs.

Follow up

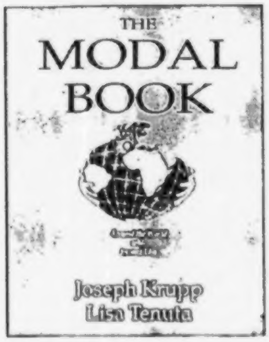
Bring in some advertising supplements, store fliers and catalogs that show appliances, and ask the students to do some 'comparison shopping.' They can explain which items they prefer and why. More advanced students can read reviews in "Consumer Reports."

A kitchen plan



On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials



A practical grammar text published by Pro Lingua Associates, ISBN 0-86647-144-8.

The Modal Book; Around the World with Joe and Lisa by Joseph Krupp and Lisa Tenuta (Pro Lingua Associates 2002). 132 pp. ISBN 0-86647-144-8. $15 from www.ProLinguaAssociates.com.

We're always looking for lessons that present grammar in a *context*, because that is the most realistic way to teach it and the most memorable for the students. The authors of this book had the clever idea of presenting the meanings of different modals in the context of travel to various countries.

For example, one exercise practices modals of prohibition (*can't / mustn't* or the expression *is not allowed to*) by asking about activities that are prohibited in certain countries. "In the U.S. you are not allowed to drink alcohol in bars if you are under 21." Another exercise asks what kinds of things are prohibited when visiting museums: "You can't take photos in this museum."

For modals of possibility, the students are asked to write, for example, 3 possibilities about what *might* happen next if the airline loses your luggage. For modals of desire, for example, they write 3 things they *would like to do* if they visit Japan.

Once the students have studied the examples and written the exercises, there is an extended anecdote for reading and discussion that makes use of the modals in question. These are about everyday life; it would have been interesting if the stories were also on the travel theme.

Intermediate or advanced students could benefit from this text. It would be especially good practice for advanced students who are shaky on modals and need practice.

AMAZING STORIES

Stories for retelling published by Houghton Mifflin, ISBN 0-395-88440-3.

Amazing Stories to Tell and Retell, Books 1, 2 and 3 by Lynda Berish and Sandra Thibaudeau (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999). Book 1 is 142pp. ISBN 0-395-88440-3. $23.96 from http://college.hmco.com/esl/instructors/.

These books aren't new but they still fill a need that many instructors have—more stories for their students to read and talk about. If you like Sandra Heyer's *True Stories* series you will also like the human interest stories in these books. The *Amazing Stories* are somewhat more advanced; Book 1 is suitable for low intermediates, Books 2 and 3 for intermediates and above.

In Book 1 the stories tend to be 5 or 6 paragraphs in length, about 250 words. Among the stories is one about a 2-year old who saved her mother by dialing 911, a pair of identical twins who married identical twins, and how one woman started 'Career Closet' to help poor women dress for success in applying for jobs. Some of the stories are amusing and quirky but most of them have a warm-hearted tone that shows how little things can make a difference.

Each story has an interesting warm-up activity to help put the story in context. Following each story are 3 or 4 vocabulary exercises; these are brief but useful. Several retelling activities are suggested, including telling the story from a different point of view. Then there will be a few discussion questions to connect the students' experiences and opinions to the point of the story. Finally, a hypothetical problem is presented for the students to discuss in groups.

Some writing suggestions are also included but these are usually short assignments, such as compiling a list or designing a poster. The greatest benefit of this material is in generating a lot of student interest and discussion, and of course practice in retelling.

Recently received in the HOE office:

Workplace Plus, Living and Working in English; a series published by Longman, 2001.

LifePrints, ESL for Adults; the Second Edition (2002) of a series published by New Readers Press.

We would love to hear from teachers who have used either of these texts with their students. Feedback, thoughts, reactions, advice? Thanks!

Multi-level dictation: A recorded message

Recorded messages with 'options' are used everywhere now—at schools, businesses, banks, agencies—almost everywhere you call. These can be frustrating, even sometimes for native speakers. What if you forget which option you wanted once you listen to the end? What if the question you have isn't listed in the options? And if you can't understand the recording, what do you do then?

We thought it might be helpful to your students to study and listen carefully to a message that includes many of the standard options in common use. Perhaps this will help them to navigate the next such recording they hear.

Preparation

Make a copy of the worksheets on the next two pages. Cut apart the levels, enlarge each one (to make the spaces easier to write in), then make copies for your students. Be sure to make extra copies, as students often like to try this exercise more than once at different levels.

Read and discuss the message below with your students. Note that this text is quite a bit more challenging than some of our previous dictations. You probably will want the students to look at the full text and work through it together before trying a dictation. (Use photocopies of this text, or present it on an overhead projector.)

To help the students focus on the meaning, ask as many comprehension questions as you can think of. For example:

I want to hear this message again. What should I do? (More than one possible correct answer.)

I need to speak with one of the students at the school. It's an emergency. What should I do?

I want to know if the school is open on Saturdays.

I want to speak to a teacher, but I don't know her extension number.

Tomorrow is a holiday and I'm not sure if the school will be closed.

I want to speak to Jane Thomas. She works at the school. Her extension is 234.

My friend wants to study English at this school. What should she do?

I want to find out the phone number for a different school, the XYZ school.

I don't understand this message. What should I do?

Follow-up

If your school has a recorded message, transcribe it for the students. If the students are advanced enough, you could assign this as homework (but not everyone at once, you don't want to jam the phone lines!).

Ask the students what other recorded messages they have encountered. If possible, record or transcribe these and go over them together. Discuss strategies for coping with these.

Five levels, A – E, are provided on the next two pages.

*For **low beginners**, you can supply them with a word list to copy from so that they can succeed at Level A. Here's the word list: 1, 2, 3, 8:30, 4:30, a.m., ESL, Friday, hear, hours, know, line, listen, message, numbers, Saturday, school, time, you. (This dictation might be too challenging for basic literacy students—instead of writing you may want to focus on comprehension instead.)*

When your students are finished writing the dictation, have them help each other to correct the dictation. Level A students can provide information for Level B, C, D, and E students, because they have a more complete text!

A recorded message

Hello! This is the ABC School. Please listen to the following options. If you know your party's extension, you can press it at any time. To hear a listing of department numbers, press 1. For information about enrolling in ESL classes, press 2. If you need further assistance, stay on the line and someone will assist you shortly.

Our regular office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. To repeat this message, you may press 3. Beep!

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 12 sentences (89 words) long.

Key vocabulary and concepts are: options, extension, department, information, stay on the line, assistance, repeat.

A recorded message—Level A

Hello! This is the ABC ________ . Please ________ to the following options. If you ________ your party's extension, ________ can press it at any ________ . To ________ a listing of department ________ , press ____. For information about enrolling in ____ classes, press ____ . If ______ need further assistance, stay on the ________ and someone will assist ______ shortly.

Our regular office ________ are Monday through ________ from 8:30 a.m. to ________ p.m. and on ________ from ________ a.m. to 11:00 ______. To repeat this ________ , you may press _____. Beep!

A recorded message—Level B

Hello! ____ ____ ______ ABC School. ________ ________ ______ the following options. _____ ______ ________ your party's extension, ______ ________ ________ it at ______ time. _____ ________ ______ listing ______ department ________ , ______ 1. ______ ____________ ________ enrolling ______ ESL classes, ______ 2. _____ ______ ______ further assistance, ________ ______ ________ __________ and ____________ ______ assist you shortly.

Our regular ________ ________ ________ Monday ________ Friday ______ 8:30 a.m. ______4:30 p.m. and _____ Saturday ______8:30 a.m. _____11:00 a.m. ______ ________ ________ message, ______ ________ press 3. Beep!

A recorded message—Level C

Hello! ________ ______ ________ ABC ________ . Please ________ ______ ______ ____________ options. ______ ______ ________ ________ party's extension, ______ ______ ______ ______ at________ ________ . To ________ ______ ________ of ____________ numbers, press 1. ______ ____________ ________ enrolling ______ ______ ________ , press 2. ______ ________ ________ __________ assistance, ______ ______ ______ ________ and ________ ______ ________ you ______.

Our ________ ________ ________ ________ Monday ________ Friday ______ ______ ______ ____ ________ ______ and on Saturday ______ ______ ____ ______ ________ ______ . To ________ ________ ________ , you may ______ ____ . Beep!

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Multi-level dictation, cont'd. . .

A recorded message—Level D

______! ______ ______ ______ ______ ______. ______
______ ______ ______ ______ ______. ______ ______ ______
______ ______ ______, ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
______. ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
______, ______ ______. ______ ______ ______ ______
______ ______ ______, ______ ______. ______ ______ ______ ______
______, ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
______ ______ ______.

______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______. ______ ______
______ ______, ______ ______ ______ ______. ______!

A recorded message—Level E

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

Some vocabulary help

options – you can choose what you want.
the following – the next things after this.
"your party" – the person you are trying to call.
extension – an extra phone number, at a school or company.
press – push with your finger
enroll – sign up, register
stay on the line – keep listening, wait
assist – help
further assistance – more help
shortly – in a short time, soon.

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October 9, 2002

U.S., Britain Give U.N. New Iraq Plan

On September 27 the U.S. and Britain gave the United Nations (U.N.) a new plan for dealing with Iraq. The plan would give Iraq's President Saddam Hussein seven days to reveal all the materials he has to make weapons of mass destruction. The plan would also tell Hussein to open his palaces for weapons searches.

Under the plan, if Hussein does not obey, the U.N. could use all necessary means against him. It could include a military attack.

On September 16, Iraq said weapons inspectors could return under current U.N. agreements. Iraq rejected the new plan on September 28. Iraqi officials said they would not agree to any new U.N. plan. They said the new demands were making new rules for the weapons inspectors.

The U.S. and Britain ignored Iraq's rejection of the plan. Instead, the U.S. and Britain kept trying to get support from Russia, France, and China. Those three countries want to carry out inspections under current U.N. plans.

The U.S. and Britain need the support of Russia, France, and China for their plan. All five countries are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. They all have "veto power." If any one of these countries votes "no," the plan would be defeated.

U.N. weapons inspectors and Iraqi officials met in Vienna, Austria, September 30 to October 1. They made plans for the inspectors to return to Iraq.

FREED American youth follow a U.S. soldier in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, September 26. They were leaving an area of fighting.

Americans Freed in Ivory Coast

French and U.S. troops rescued 148 Americans, including 98 children in Bouaké, Ivory Coast in late September. The Americans were among 191 Westerners who were freed. The Ivory

The rebels failed to take over the government. They did capture Bouaké and Korhogo, another city.

French troops got the rebels to agree to a 48-hour cease-fire. This gave the city in the Ivory Coast.

The uprising was started by former soldiers who were angry at the government. It had dismissed them from the army. The government said the

Cuba Shows Interest In American Food

U.S. food companies held a food fair in Havana, Cuba, from September 26 to October 1. They want to urge Cuba to buy more U.S. products. The food industry is the only American industry allowed to sell goods to the island nation.

The U.S. government banned trade with Cuba in the early 1960s. It did so shortly after Cuban President Fidel Castro came to power in 1959. The U.S. was against Castro's communist government. The U.S. said it was a threat to democracy.

In 2000 the U.S. government lifted some trade limits against Cuba. The U.S. began to allow the sale of American food and other farm products

companies were Gerber, Sara Lee, and Archer Daniels Midland.

Since November 2001, Cuba has bought more than $140 million worth of American food.

President Bush is against easing limits on Cuba. But many U.S. lawmakers want to improve economic relations between the two countries.

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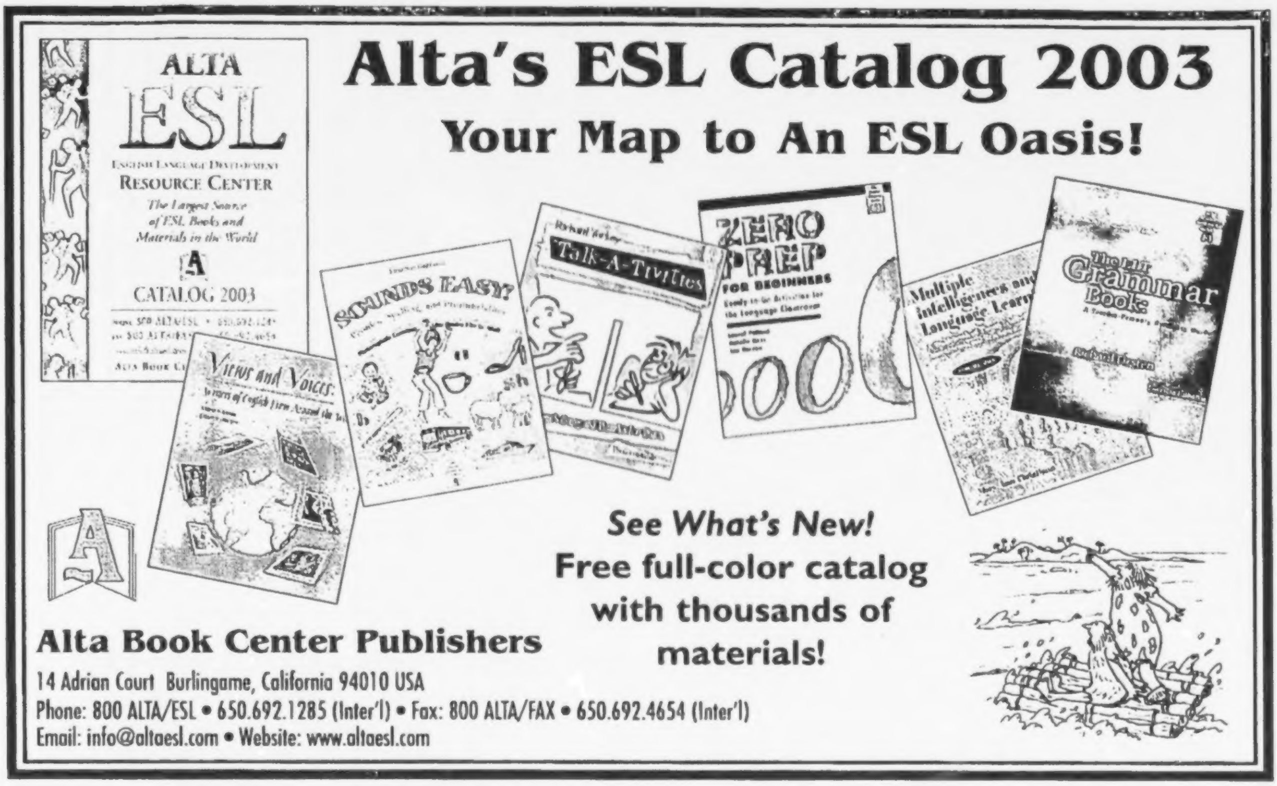
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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Seasonal goodies—We've printed some other useful activities for this time of year, so if you have some of our back issues stashed somewhere, you may want to pull these out!

On the topic of **winter**, we've had two multi-level crossword puzzles: "Winter" in Vol. 6, No. 5 (p.8) and "Keeping warm in the winter" in Vol. 9, No. 4 (p.8). Both of these include follow-up writing exercises.

On the topic of **Christmas traditions** we had a crossword puzzle "Holiday customs" in Vol. 4, No. 4 (p. 4) and a picture story for literacy-level learners or beginners called "Linda's Christmas" in Vol. 8, No. 4 (p.4). These are both about the secular aspects of the holiday and not about religion.

All cultures celebrate holidays with **food**, and last year we brought you a multi-level dictation called "A student dinner" that may fit in with your end-of-year class activities. SeeVol. 11, No. 4 (p. 4).

Looking forward to a fresh new year? Our reading and grammar activities about **New Year's** resolutions have been very popular. See Vol. 9, No. 4 (p.12).

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Memory tricks

For the first time, some neurologists in London have done a scientific study to find out why some people seem to have much better memories. Are these people smarter? Do they have different brain structures, or do they use special techniques for remembering things?

The scientists looked at a group of people with phenomenal memories (the type of people who win contests) and compared them to a group of people without this ability. First, they gave both groups a number of tests of verbal and non-verbal skills, and found that by these measures the two groups were comparable in intellectual ability. So intelligence didn't seem to be what distinguished the super-memorizers.

Next, they gave a battery of memory tests, which of course the super-memorizers did better at, while taking brain-scans of all the test subjects. You might be surprised to learn that the brain structures of the good memorizers were the same as those of the bad memorizers. There doesn't appear to be any difference in these people's brains.

There was a difference in brain *activity*, however. The super-memorizers were activating the parts of their brain used for spacial memory and navigation, while the regular folks were not.

At the end of these tests, the scientists asked all the test subjects what kind of strategies they had used to remember the items in the test. Each of the super-memorizers, it turns out, was employing a learning strategy known as 'route strategy' or 'Method of loci' (places).

This is a well-known memory technique used since the ancient Greeks. Here's how it works: You imagine a well-known route, such as walking through your home. You visualize the items you want to remember, and place them in specific places on this route. When you need to recall the information, you mentally 'walk through' the route and visualize each place to remember what you placed there.

Of course, this technique is challenging but becomes easier with practice. It explains why the spacial memory zones were activated in the people who were using this method. There are other effective memory techniques also—for example, creating a narrative to include a number of items helps in recalling these items as well as their correct order.

How does this research apply to ESL teaching? Well first of all, it suggests that effective learning is not the result of superior IQ or special brain development. It appears that effective learning (at least as far as remembering things goes) has something to do with strategies, effort and practice.

It also seems clear that what we've already suspected is true—the more three-dimensional or real things are to us, the easier they are to remember. If we can put things in context, even in our imaginations, they will seem real and we can re-visualize them, or recall them when we need to.

We are three-dimensional beings with brains that think in three dimensions, too. Now, how will this idea affect the way we teach?

—the Editor.

(The research mentioned above was published January 2003 in the journal 'Nature Neuroscience.')

Hands-on
English

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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Although she's trying to look busy for this photo, editor Anna Silliman always has time for our readers! Please let us know how we can help you.

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12-5

Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Some notes from long-time readers. . .

"Great publication. I've been a subscriber almost from the 'get-go' and have found *Hands-on English* to be helpful through several iterations of my ESL teaching career. Thank you for your efforts!"

—Chris Reinhard
Lawrence, KS

"Thanks for a wonderful resource."

—Allen Richards
Hamot Medical Center, Erie, PA

"This is a fabulous service! Thanks!"

—Sr. Kathleen Carberry
The Learning Connection
Brentwood, NY

"Love the multi-level dictation."

—Jo Ann Momeni
Lincoln Land Community College
Springfield, IL

"Thank you for providing practical and topical lessons and suggestions for my Adult Ed classes!"

—Susan Barnett
Teaneck, NJ

. . .and from a new subsciber

"I am new to teaching English to speakers of other languages, and I look forward to learning as much about the field as I can. Your publication will be very helpful for me, and I will be going through the long index [on the Hands-on English website] to order back issues in the future.

"Thank you for all your good work."

—Bronwyn Anthony
Hermosa Beach, CA

Do you have ideas to share?

The Editor would like to take this opportunity, as the new year begins, to remind you that we welcome input from our readers! Lesson ideas, hints & tips, activities —if they worked for you they may well be useful to other teachers!

When you send *Hands-on English* a lesson idea or teaching tips, you are doing something to help your colleagues all over the U.S. and Canada (and some overseas), who are basically working with the same kind of students, in the same conditions you are and who have the same issues.

And wow, are they grateful for help! New teachers especially tell us they appreciate input from their more experienced colleagues. Practical suggestions based on real experience are much more useful than anything they've received in training courses. Veteran teachers have a different problem—they are sometimes tired out and overwhelmed by too much to do. Practical input helps them, by giving them a 'boost' when they need it.

All of our readers benefit from the encouraging knowledge that they are part of a community, even though chances are they are working in isolation.

Your sphere of activity, where you are doing your best to help people, is most likely with your students. When you contribute to *Hands-on English*, though, you are spreading that sphere beyond the classroom, to the classrooms of many other teachers. It's a big step, and a generous one, for you to take. (Especially since we all know that you have more than enough work to do already!)

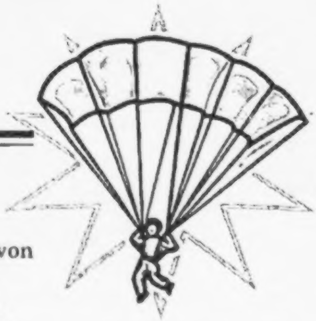
I hope that the above reasons will encourage you to pick up a pen or a keyboard and contact us with some of your great ideas. And. . .aw, heck—the real reason? We just love hearing from you!!!

With best wishes for a great start to a new year,

—the Editor.

From the field:

An ESL drop-in center



*Contributed by **Gina Bivings**,in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

Here's an interesting description of a program that is different from many of the programs our readers are teaching in,but with some similarities in terms of the challenges.

I teach ESL students at the Cathedral of St. Andrew on Sunday afternoons in the church basement. This is a parish that is about 50% English speaking and 50% Spanish speaking. We feel fortunate that all of our students are Spanish speaking. Our students are all adults and for the most part working full time. They come down to meet with us after the noon mass, which is in Spanish.

There are four tutors total, with one to four there on any given week. We also have two helpers; one is a teen whose mom is one of the tutors. The other volunteer comes in once a month to test students with the official Literacy Council test. All of the tutors were trained through the Kent County Literacy Council.

The first year we floundered quite a bit. We lost two of our tutors, who wanted to go to a more structured situation. Rather than give up, we brainstormed ways to make it work for the tutors, to keep us from being too frustrated with the drop-in, flexible-no-matter-what situation.

Flexible format

We have divided our students into three categories: Beginners, which are students who know very, very little English. Two of our tutors work with this group. Intermediate, which are students that have been with us a while and are moving toward writing and conversation. The final group, which I tutor, is advanced. I mainly work on grammar, pronunciation, idioms, and everyday conversation.

Some of our students come to us for a very short period of time. We find that some want a more structured program, so we refer them to one. Many that come have immediate, short-term needs that we try to help with.

One student came just long enough to go over the citizenship test questions. Many of the questions our students ask are about every day issues that you and I face with very little thought. One of the students was having a problem with his car insurance. His tutor wrote down questions he should ask his agent. They went over the questions until the student could say and understand them clearly. Then they went over the possible answers.

One of my students was sure he had won a computer. Because of the trust we have built he brought in the "winning" letter to look at together. I explained what he would have to buy to "win" the computer. The following week I brought in newspaper ads to see if he could get a better deal buying it at a store. He did end up buying a computer by mail order, but he knew all of the questions to ask before buying.

Current events topics

One thing that I do is watch the local newspaper for articles about events in Mexico. I ask my students to read it over and then we discuss it. I also bring in a local Spanish newspaper. I ask my students to read an article and then tell me in English what the article is about. Once in a while I get lucky and we find an article that is on the same topic in the *Grand Rapids Press* and in *El Hispano*. Then we can talk about the different ways it was reported.

We tried to add a little more structure by using a beginning reading book series from the Literacy Council. But because we do not have the continuity week to week it did not work well. New students who stay with us four weeks get a dictionary that we really found to be helpful. It is an English/ Spanish dictionary with many pictures as well as words and a good pronunciation guide in the back. Although I have heard the criticism that we shouldn't give our students bilingual dictionaries, we find that it helps us teach. Each of the tutors also keeps a dictionary at their table, since the students take theirs home the day they get them.

Some of our students have been with us since we started over a year ago. Some have been with us a short time. Some come and go and come and go. We average seven students a week, but have had as many as 20 and as few as one.

A challenge for our readers

How would you deal with this teaching environment? What materials would you want to have ready? What techniques do you think would work? What other suggestions do you have?

We'd love to hear what you think. —*Editor.*

Dear Abbie:
Tips on introducing a new unit

—**by Abbie Tom,** ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

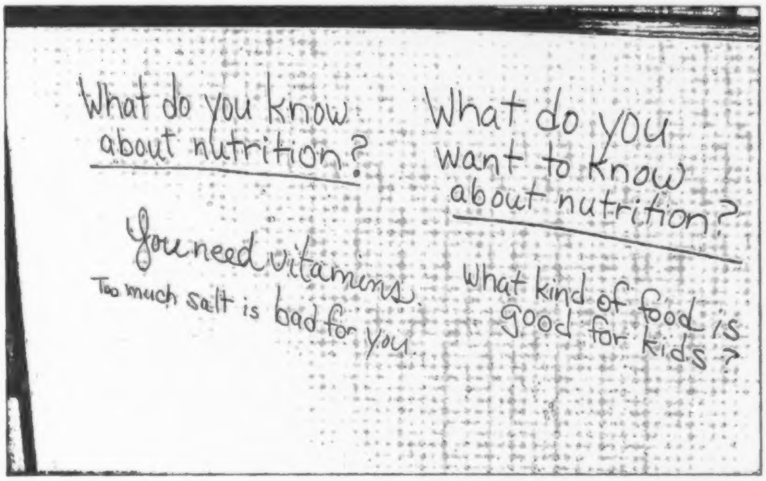
Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at ***Hands-on English*** *and we'll pass it along to her. Thank you!*

Recently we asked "Dear Abbie" for some ideas on starting a new topic with a class. Here's what she responded:

Make two lists

One of my favorite ways to begin a new unit (as well as to introduce other topics like Valentine's Day or St. Patrick's Day) is to put two columns on the board: What do you know about ______? and What do you want to know about______? I often put these up before class begins so that students can write their responses on the board before we start.

The first question helps students activate their previous knowledge of the topic (often mentioning things I didn't think they would know) and gives me an idea of where to begin. The second question helps the students become actively engaged in learning about the topic and also helps guide me in selecting materials to teach. I sometimes write the "want to know" answers on sheets of paper or plastic which I can bring out again at the end of the unit to see if we covered everything. In a more advanced class, students might write a paragraph or more about what they want to know.



What do you know about nutrition?

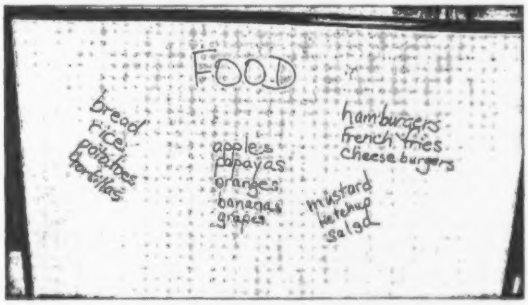
You need vitamins.

Too much salt is bad for you.

What do you want to know about nutrition?

What kind of food is good for kids?

Brainstorming about the students' existing knowledge and what they want to learn helps with lesson planning!



An example of a word map in progress. The next step will be to decide on categories.

Make a word map

Another good way to begin a unit is by eliciting related vocabulary from the students. I might write FOOD, for example, at the top of the board and as students give me words I can arrange them in different columns (fruits in one, vegetables in another, verbs such as eat or cook in another). This can also be done in a web, with food in the middle and lines going out to different categories of food. After the web or columns are made, students can identify what is the same about the words. That is, they try to name the categories.

Dictation as intro

You can also start a unit by dictating questions about it to the students (such as: How do you make a doctor's appointment?). Have them answer as best they can. Then as the unit proceeds, have them check back to look at their answers and see if they were right.

Similarly, you can dictate true/false sentences about the topic and have the students check back later. For example, "Doctors say you should exercise 3 hours per day. True or false?"

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Idea file:
Learning about maps

Getting ready

To make use of these map practice activities, you'll need to assemble some atlases, various maps (country map, state map, city map), some rulers for measuring distances and a calculator. For the last activity you'll need some garage sale ads from local newspapers.

To extend these lessons to other parts of the world you'll also want world or regional maps, especially ones that show your students' countries.

Map activities

1. Locations. Use the prepared chart below and a map of the U.S. (or Canada) to teach some phrases used to describe map locations. Pointing at the map, give the students an example for each phrase.

It's north of __________.
It's south of __________.
It's east of __________.
It's west of __________.

It's in the northern part of ________.
It's in the southern part of ________.
It's in the eastern part of ________.
It's in the western part of ________.

It's on the ________ coast.
It's in the ______ mountains.
It's on the (north/south) border.
It's on the ______ river.

2. Guess which state. Each student chooses a secret state (or province) and describes its *location*, using phrases taught above. Others guess the state.

Tip: To do this in writing, have students describe the location on a slip of paper. Each student draws a paper, reads the description and names the state.

3. Teach "legend" (sometimes also called "key"). On a map, a legend is a list of colors and symbols used to show the locations of different things, such as airports, railroads, mountains, highways, etc. Show some legends on U.S. and state maps; some interesting ones appear in atlases. Write some symbols on the board as examples. Look at a map together and find the symbol for airport, state capitol, a railroad, etc.

4. Teach "scale." Scale is the size of something compared to what it represents. As an example, show a picture of something you have enlarged on a copy machine. I used a picture of an acorn—a dictionary is a good source for an example picture because they often print the actual measurement of the item. On your enlargement, you can show that your picture is now five times bigger (for example), so your scale is 5" = 1".

On a map, scale shows the # of miles on the ground per 1" on the map paper. Find the scale on both a country and a state map. Show an example of how you can find the distance on the map, then multiply by the scale to find the approximate distance on the ground. On various maps, use rulers to measure inches and calculate the approximate distance for the following:

from one major city to another
from your city to the nearest coast
from your city to the nearest border
from the school to the DMV
from the school to a student's home

5. Learn about a map "grid." The horizontal and vertical lines which divide a map into squares make up the grid. These squares have letters and numbers. The letter and number for the horizontal and vertical sides of a square tell which square to look at to find a street or city. These are called "map coordinates." Coordinates are the letters and numbers that define one place. On a city or state map, use rulers or some string to demonstrate finding the coordinates for a location. Look in the map index for the name of a street (or city) and find the coordinates.

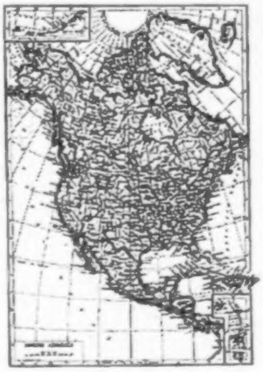
Then, practice with some grid questions. For example: What lake is located on the U.S. map at 32-O? (Lake Meredith, TX) Or: On the state map, what legend symbols do you see within the 6-H grid? (2 lakes, a state park, an airport, etc.)

Next, name some locations on various maps and ask students to tell you the coordinates. For example, Where is I-80? (state or local map) Where is our school? (city map) Where is Grand Rapids, Michigan? (U.S. map) Where is South Korea? (world map)

Contributed by ***Linda Phipps****, Midwest City, Oklahoma.*

We're delighted to bring you these well thought-out exercises for teaching about maps. Linda used these lessons in about three one-hour sessions (#1–6 one day, #7–12 the second day, the rest the third day.)

The students get practice in reading and problem-solving. They gain tools and knowledge they can use in real life and in citizenship studies. For more ideas on teaching about maps, see Abbie Tom's article in Vol. 11, No. 6 of Hands-on English.



Address abbreviations:

Apt.
Ave.
Blvd.
Ct.
Ctr.
Cir.
Dr.
Hwy.
Ln.
Pk.
Pkwy.
Pl.
Rd.
R. R.
St.
Tpk
Trl.
P.O.B.

6. Learn about "indexes." Show the indexes on various maps and point out that things are listed alphabetically. Practice finding some example places in the index, and have students find the map coordinates, then locate these on the map. Notice also that in atlases and state maps, city entries include the population.

7. Directions: N, S, E, W. Lay out city/state/U.S./world maps. Have the students find which street/town/state/country is farthest north, south, east and west.

8. Directions practice. Have students look at a map and answer questions like: Which direction is Lake Superior from Lake Michigan? (north) If you are going from North Carolina to Tennessee, what direction would you travel? (west)

9. Introduce NE, SE, SW, NW. Looking at a U.S. map, try some questions like: What state is NE of Oklahoma? (Missouri) What state is NW of Oklahoma? (Colorado) What state is SW of Nebraska? (Colorado) What state is SE of Kansas? (Arkansas)

10. Rivers. Note that in North America, all north-south rivers run south. All east-west rivers that are east of the Rocky Mountains run east, west of the Rockies these run west. (It's easy to see why if you look at a relief map—the continent is like an upside-down "V" in shape.) Look at a map and decide: What direction does the Columbia River (WA) run? Missouri River? Mississippi? Look at a state map and talk about the rivers in your state also.

11. How to get there? Have students take turns naming both a starting point and a destination. Others will tell what direction they would travel to get there. (Use a country, state or city map.)

12. Legend practice. Using a legend, locate an interstate highway and tell which direction it runs. What colors are highways? Bodies of water? Mountains? and other items.

13. Index practice. Find a town in your state with a population of 3,000 or less. Find another town with a population of about 100,000 or more. What are the two biggest cities in your state?

14. Geographic information. How high is Mount McKinley of Alaska? Where would you find this information? What is the highest place in your state?

15. Where I'm from. Use a world map and have each student show us where his or her country is located (give coordinates). Tell us a little about this country, what city you are from, the language spoken there, etc.

16. Getting to school. Looking at a local map, invent an imaginary new student and show where he/she lives on the map. Have the students give the imaginary student directions to the school.

17. Street names. Make a list of all the words the students can think of for "street," such as avenue, etc. Look at the list of street address abbreviations (in the box at the left) and identify each of these.

To practice writing the abbreviations, have the students divide into pairs. Have one dictate the addresses from List A for the other to write, using the abbreviations. Check for errors, then switch so the second student can dictate from List B. Check for errors again.

LIST A (Read this)

Two hundred North Pine Street
Eight O Three South Bell Drive
Four thirty-nine East Short Circle
Forty-six sixteen West Rose Boulevard
Ninety-four O Eight Candy Lane
Twenty-eight hundred Northeast Park Place
Twenty-four sixty-five Southwest twenty-ninth Street
Forty-seven twenty-one Apple Parkway

List A (They should write this)

200 N. Pine St.
803 S. Bell Dr.
439 E. Short Cir.
4616 W. Rose Blvd.
9408 Candy Ln.
2800 NE Park Pl.
2465 SW 29th St.
4721 Apple Pkwy.

LIST B (Read this)

Three eleven Creek Avenue, Apartment Two B
Five twenty-eight Club Center
Forty-five twelve Line Park
Eighty-one twenty-eight Maple Road
Twenty-nine nineteen Rural Route Twelve
One forty Holly Court
Sixty-three twenty-nine East Highway One-oh-One
Post Office Box thirteen thirty-seven

List B (They should write this)

311 Creek Ave., Apt. 2B
528 Club Ctr.
4512 Line Pk.
8128 Maple Rd
2919 R.R. 12
140 Holly Ct.
6329 E. Hwy. 101
P.O.B. 1337

18. About garage sales. Many people like to sell everything they had in the house that they don't want anymore, from baby clothes and furniture to kitchen items.

Look up garage sale ads in the newspaper. Choose one sale that you are interested in, and locate the address on a city map. Describe how to get there from here.

For this activity you can use one section of an ad page and enlarge it so the students can read it better, then distribute the same page to everybody. For more advanced students, they can each work from a different newspaper or a different part of the page.

Ask if any of the students have attended garage sales. If they do, ask them to report back to the class what they found!

19. Wrap up with a board game. Create a board game that includes lots of local businesses and agencies the students are familiar with. The cue cards can include addresses and directions. [Editor's note: Linda described such a board game for us in Vol. 8, No. 4, page 7. The activity was called "Going to Hawaii!"]

Map Vocabulary

legend: A list of colors and symbols used on maps to show the locations of different things such as airports, railroads, mountains, highways and more.

scale: The size of something compared to what it represents. For example, 1 inch = 5 miles.

grid: On a map, a grid is horizontal and vertical lines which divide a map into squares. These squares are identified with letters and numbers. The letters and numbers help you to find a street or city.

coordinates: The two pieces of information that define a location (like a city), using letters and numbers for horizontal and vertical squares. For example: 6-H, or B-12.

index: On a city map, this is a list of streets with the map coordinates. On a state or world map, this is a list of cities and other places with the map coordinates.

Conversation activity:

"Can you say that again, please?"

This should be a confidence-builder for your students! The more they practice this, the more confident they will be.

Practice asking for clarification

Non-native speakers of English sometimes get shy about asking when they don't understand something. This is understandable (who wants to look like a dummy?), but they need to overcome this reservation in order to interact effectively with the people around them. This can be extremely important, especially in the workplace.

Here is a silly exercise designed to give students at any level practice in being assertive about understanding what someone else says. The students take a role card and introduce themselves to one another. (The scene is perhaps at a professional gathering.) However, one word in each person's introduction is (purposely) unintelligible. Therefore, in order to find out who this person is, the listener will have to ask to hear the information again. The second time, the speaker will say the word correctly.

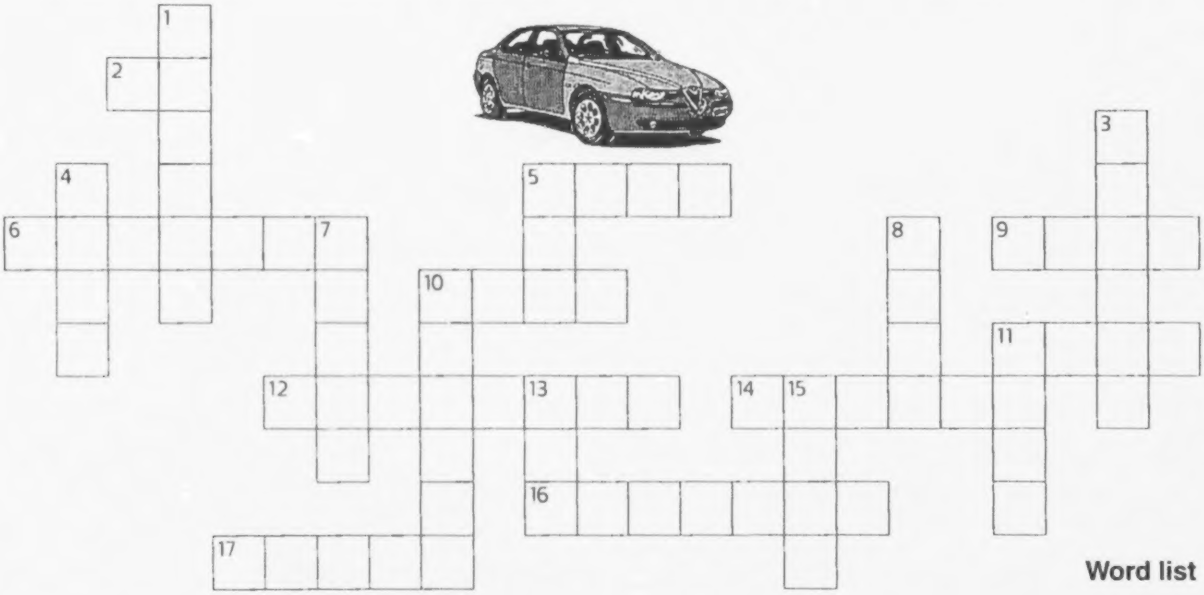
Before beginning, ask your students for some examples of what they can say if they don't understand someone. Write these on the board so that everyone can see and refer to these. Then hand out the role cards and make sure the students understand and can pronounce what's on their card. (Everyone can practice saying "*mumumum.*"

Next, ask all the students to stand and mingle. Their task is to meet and greet each of the others and find out something about them. However, if hear a word they don't understand, they have to ask about it!

I'm sorry, I don't understand.
What did you say?
What is your job? (or, What is your name?)
What?
Could you repeat that for me?

My name is Bill Smith and I'm a *mumumum.* (engineer)	My name is Kathy *mumumum* and I'm a teacher. (Ricardo)	My name is Fred Jones and I'm *mumumum.* (unemployed)
My name is Anne Meyers and I'm a *mumumum* farmer. (vegetable)	My name is Peter *mumumum* and I'm a police officer. (Montana)	My name is Anita Evans and I'm a *mumumum* student. (mathematics)
My name is Bill Gates and I'm the CEO of *mumumum* Corporation. (Microsoft)	My name is Berta Nilsen and I'm a *mumumum.* (radiologist)	My name is George Wilson and I'm training to be a *mumumum.* (astronaut)
My name is Wanda Winters and I'm a computer *mumumum.* (programmer)	My name is Spike Landers and I'm a *mumumum.* (rap singer)	My name is Susan Williams and I'm a *mumumum.* (screenwriter)

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Driving a car



Level A

Across clues

2. Watch the traffic light. When it turns green, you can ______.
5. The speed limit on the highway is 65, but in the ________ it's 30.
6. Be __________ when you drive in the city! There is a lot of traffic.
9. You can't pass other _______ here. It's a 'No passing' zone.
10. You can't _______ here. The sign says 'No parking.'
11. Please ______ down, you are going too fast! The police will give you a speeding ticket.
12. When a school bus stops, it will flash red lights so the __________ can get on or off.
14. "You can't turn here." "Why not?" "It's a one-way ________."
16. To get a _________ license, you have to go to the DMV and take a test.
17. If you wear your seatbelt when you _____, you will be much safer.

Down clues

1. After you park, don't ______ to lock the car!
3. If you see a _______ walking at a crosswalk, you should stop.
4. Please slow down, you're going too ____!
5. "What happened to your ____?" "My husband was in a small accident. Someone hit the car, but he is okay."
7. If you come to a red _____, you have to stop.
8. Please drive slowly, this is a school _____!
10. "The ______ stopped me for speeding yesterday." "Did you get a ticket?" "No, but the officer told me to be careful."
11. You don't have to ______ at this intersection, but if you see traffic, you should yield.
13. A "STOP" sign is always _____ with white letters.
15. When you come to the next intersection, ______ right.

Word list

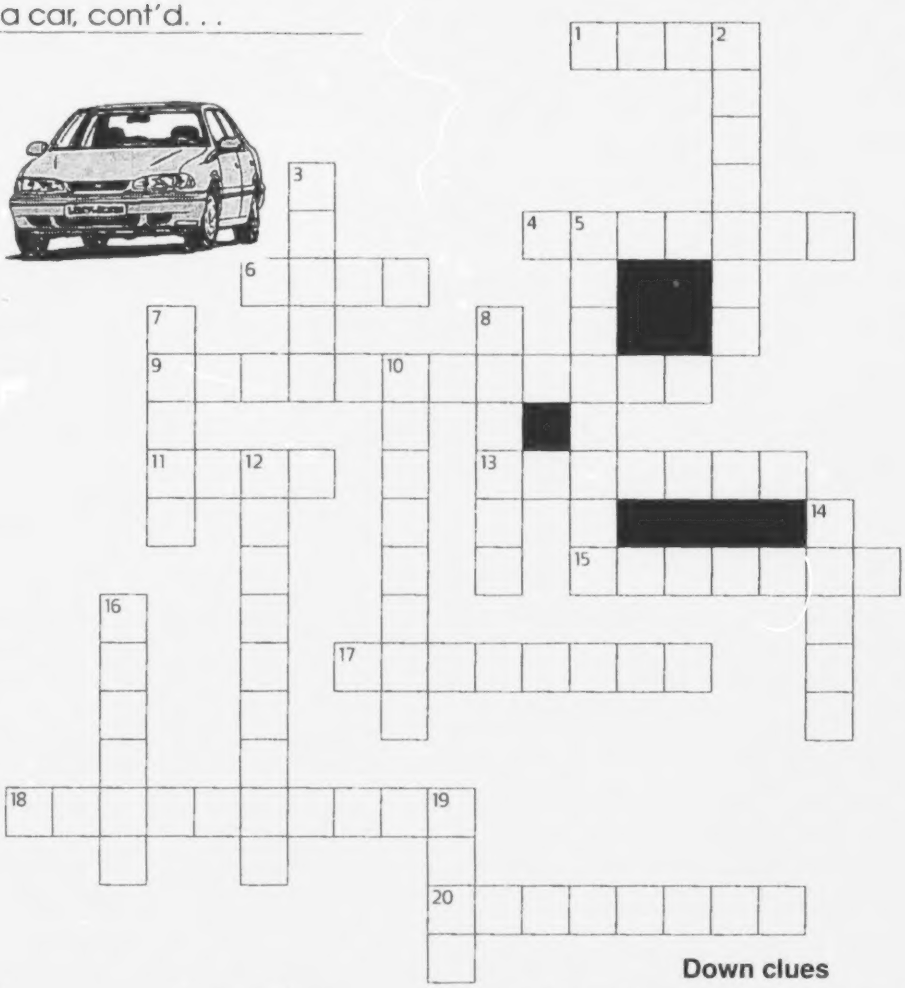
car
careful
cars
children
city
drive
drivers
fast
forget
go
light
park
person
police
red
slow
stop
street
turn
zone

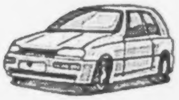
Note to the instructor: This Level A puzzle is very good practice for Level B, because the Level A and B clues use exactly the same sentences. The vocabulary is needed for Level A is much easier, so students can prepare for Level B by doing Level A first. On the following page, Levels C & D practice the same vocabulary but the clues are more advanced in language level.

Crossword: Driving a car, cont'd. . .

Word list

accident
crosswalk
drive
intersection
light
lock
one-way
parking
passing
school
seatbelt
sign
slow down
speeding
speed limit
stop
test
ticket
traffic
yield





Level B

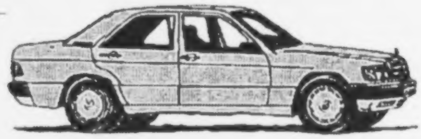
Across clues

1. If you come to a red light, you have to ______.
4. You can't pass other cars here. It's a 'No ___________' zone.
6. A "STOP" _______ is always red with white letters.
9. When you come to the next _________, turn right.
11. After you park, don't forget to _______ the car.
13. "You can't turn here." "Why not?" "It's a __________ street!"
15. Be careful when you drive in the city! There is a lot of ________.
17. Please ____________, you're going too fast!
18. The __________ on the highway is 65, but in the city it's 30.
20. Please slow down, you are going too fast! The police will give you a ______ ticket!

Down clues

2. You can't park here. The sign says "No _______."
3. Please _______ slowly, this is a school zone!
5. "What happened to your car?" "My husband was in a small ________. Someone hit the car, but he is okay."
7. You don't have to stop at this intersection, but if you see traffic, you should ______.
8. When a _____ bus stops, it will flash red lights so the children can get on or off.
10. If you wear your _________ when you drive, you will be much safer.
12. If you see a person walking at a ______, you should stop.
14. Watch the traffic ______. When it turns green, you can go.
16. "The police stopped me for speeding yesterday." "Did you get a ____?" "No, but the officer told me to be careful."
19. To get a drivers license, you have to go the the DMV and take a _____.

Crossword: Driving a car, cont'd. . .



Level C

Across clues

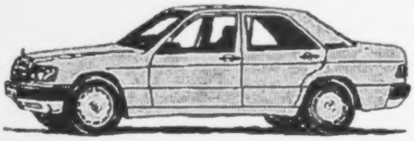
1. If a police car flashes its lights at you, you have to _____.
4. You can drive in the left lane when you are ________ another car.
6. A speed limit ______ tells you how fast you can go.
9. Look left and look right before you go through an ________.
11. If you don't ______ the car, someone might steal your things.
13. This is a _______ street. You can go east, but you can't go west.
15. If the _____ signal is red, you should stop.
17. It's a good idea to ________ if the street is icy or wet.
18. The _________ is lower near a school or hospital.
20. If the speed limit is 35 but you are going 40, then you are ________.

Down clues

2. If you pay, you can leave your car in a ________ garage.
3. "Where did you learn how to ___?" "My father taught me."
5. If you have an _______, you have to stop and give your name and address.
7. This sign is red and white, and has a triangle shape.
8. If a ______ bus stops, you have to stop and wait.
10. Before you start driving, remember to fasten your _________.
12. A _______ is marked with white lines on the street.
14. A traffic ______ can be red, yellow or green.
16. If you get a traffic ______, you have to pay some money and maybe go to court.
19. Before you can drive legally, you have to pass a written _____.

Note: the puzzle that goes with these clues is on page 11 (the same one as Level B).

Level D



Across clues

1. If you see a pedestrian in the crosswalk, you should _____.
4. _______ other cars is very dangerous.
6. The shape of a warning _____ is a yellow diamond.
9. The place where two streets meet is an ________.
11. You should do this to keep your car secure.
13. A ______ street is for traffic in one direction.
15. A busy street has a lot of ________.
17. When you drive in a hospital zone or a school zone, you should ________.
18. The miles per hour allowed by law is the _______.
20. This means going too fast.

Down clues

2. If you leave your car in an illegal _____ place, you might get a ticket.
3. Please _____ carefully.
5. An _________ is a car crash.
7. _______ means wait for another car to go first.
8. This kind of bus is always yellow.
10. This is a safety feature for each person in the car.
12. This is where pedestrians can go on the street.
14. Stop if the ______ is red.
16. When you make a driving mistake, you sometimes get this paper from the police.
19. An examination for new drivers.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Richard Yorkey
Talk-A-Tivities
Problem Solving and Puzzles for Pairs
Photocopiable

A golden oldy returns!

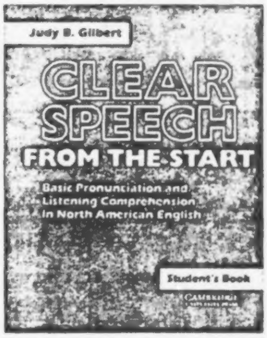
Talk-A-Tivities: Problem Solving and Puzzles for Pairs by Richard Yorkey (republished by Alta Book Center Publishers 2002). 122 pp. ISBN 1-882483-85-5. $21.95 from www.altaesl.com. Photocopiable.

Years ago, when dinosaurs still roamed the earth, this book was one of our favorite tools in our teaching collection. Okay, it wasn't quite *that* long ago—the book was originally published in 1985—but it had since fallen out of print. We are delighted to see that Alta has brought it back and made it available again.

The short activities in this book provide useful supplements for any teacher with intermediate through advanced students. Most of the activities are what we call 'information gap' activities. That is, the two students are given different information which they have to share verbally in order to solve a problem. For example, one student has a map (of a supermarket, a town, a region) that is blank; the other student has the same map with some important features marked. To fill in the missing information, the second student has to describe carefully where these items are.

We like almost all the activities in this book. The map practice activities are especially useful. The 'Appointment Book' activity gives two busy people a copy of their weekly schedule with the assignment to find a good meeting time. There are numerous examples of the 'strip story' technique which we sometimes also bring you in *Hands-on English*. And there are many different kinds of cooperative crossword puzzles where, for example, one student has the clues but the other has the puzzle. And finally, there are do-it-yourself crosswords where the students write clues for each other.

In each case, the students are motivated to negotiate meaning in order to solve a problem—which is excellent, structured practice in communicating.


Judy B. Gilbert
CLEAR SPEECH
FROM THE START
Basic Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in North American English
Student's Book
CAMBRIDGE

At last—pronunciation for beginners!

Clear Speech, From the Start; Basic Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in North American English, by Judy B. Gilbert (Cambridge University Press, 2001). 133 pp. ISBN 0-521-63737-6. A Teacher's Book is also available. See www.cambridge.org.

Most pronunciation texts are for advanced students—they are too cluttered and complicated to use with beginners. But it seems a shame not to teach something about pronunciation right from the start, letting students avoid developing problems that will be hard to fix later. Here is the one text we know of that is designed to do this.

The student material is simple, visual and clear. It introduces the students gradually to the most important concepts in English pronunciation—rhythm, intonation, stress (the 'music' of English), long and short vowels, linking (blending) and final consonant sounds. The teaching techniques are multisensory and "hands on," including things like tapping out syllables with your hand and walking to the rhythm of a sentence. Some techniques, like stretching a rubber band to show a strong (stressed) syllable we think every ESL teacher would want to incorporate into their repertoire.

The main focus of the student work is on listening for specific features. Each of the 16 units has 7 or 8 listening activities (some are listen-and-repeat) and 4 or 5 structured pair work activities. You might do a unit in one or two sessions. Each unit builds on the others, and by the end of this course students will know some pronunciation and spelling rules, they will have developed an understanding and a good ear for vowel sounds, and they should have a strong sense of the correct 'music' or sound of English.

We don't usually find teacher's editions very useful, but the Teacher's Book for this material is valuable and it's a 'must have.' First of all, Judy Gilbert gives you a clear, short explanation of each concept you are teaching, so you don't have to be a linguist to use this book. Second, she gives additional teaching suggestions for many of the exercises, in case your students have any trouble. And third, you'll find suggestions for games and follow-up activities, including more pair activities and good ideas for demonstrations that will enhance the lesson. (An audio CD comes with the teacher's text.)

We think many of our readers will find this pronunciation book teachable for them and learnable for their students.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Multi-level dictation:
Exercise and good health

Here's an opportunity for your students to discuss a well-publicized public health problem in the U.S.—reduced physical activity. Immigrants from more active cultures quickly adapt to this pattern of life, so this is a health issue not only for Americans but also for your students and their families.

When beginning this topic, avoid asking individual students whether or not they exercise. This would be a rather negative approach (especially if they don't exercise), and puts you in the position of criticizing people's personal habits. Instead, start by reading the passage below, about a trend in our society and its consequences.

Once the students have discussed this passage and talked about what options for exercise are available, then it might be fun to ask individual students what kind of exercise they prefer.

Preparation for the dictation

Make a copy of the worksheets (A, B, C and D) on the next two pages. Cut apart the levels, enlarge each one (to make the spaces easier to write in), then make copies for your students. Be sure to make extra copies, as students often like to try this activity more than once at different levels.

Have each student select the level they want to try. Read the passage aloud at natural speed, pausing between sentences to give the students time to write. You can repeat the passage as many times as the students wish.

When your students are finished writing the dictation, have them help each other to make corrections. Level A students can provide information for Level B, C, D, and E students, because they have a more complete text!

Follow-up writing activity

Prepare an advertisement—Have the students work in small groups to prepare an ad that will help promote exercise. Tell the students they will have a half-page space in the newspaper and they can put anything in it they want. For beginning students, you many want to have each group select one specific form of exercise (ie., walking) to promote. Supply the students with some large poster paper so that they can present their completed ad to the rest of the class.

Vocabulary—See page 17 for a follow-up activity related to exercise.

Five levels, A – E, are provided on the next two pages.

*For **low beginners**, you can supply them with a word list to copy from so that they can succeed at Level A. Here's the word list:*

30, 25, Americans, car, day, exercise, go, good, home, live, people, sit, TV, work, you.

Exercise and good health

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 12 sentences (105 words) long.

Key verbs are: exercise, drive, take, sit, live.

Key nouns are: heart, muscles, blood, bones, mind.

Most Americans don't exercise enough. They drive a car to work. They drive a car to go shopping. They take an elevator to go up stairs. At work, they usually sit in front of a computer all day. At home, they sit and watch TV.

Doctors and scientists know that exercise is good for your heart. It's also good for your muscles, your blood, your bones and your mind. People who exercise are healthier and they live longer. Experts say 30 minutes of exercise each day is good for you. But only 25 percent of Americans do this.

What can people do to get more exercise?

Discussion

1. Why don't people exercise? (List as many reasons as you can.)
2. Where can people go to exercise in your community?
3. What kinds of exercise can people do? (List as many things as you can.)
4. What can you say to a friend who doesn't exercise?

Level A--Exercise and good health

Most ______________ don't exercise enough. They drive a car to _______ . They drive a _____ to go shopping. They take an elevator to ______ up stairs. At work, they usually ____ in front of a computer all ______. At _______, they sit and watch _______ .

Doctors and scientists know that ___________ is _______ for your heart. It's also _______ for your muscles, your blood, your bones and your mind. People who _________ are healthier and they ______ longer. Experts say _____ minutes of exercise each ______ is good for you. But only _____ percent of Americans do this.

What can _________ do to get more exercise?

Level B--Exercise and good health

Most Americans _______ _____________ enough. They ________ _____ _______ to work. They drive a car _____ _______ ______________ . They _________ _____ ___________ to go up stairs. At _______, they usually _______ _______ ____________ of a computer all day. At home, _______ _______ and _________ ________ .

__________ and scientists ________ that exercise is _______ _______ _________ heart. It's also _______ _______ __________ muscles, your blood, ________ ___________ and ______ mind. __________ _______ exercise ______ healthier and _______ ________ _________ . Experts say _____ ____________ _____ _____________ each day _____ ________ ______ __________ . But only _____ ___________ _____ _______________ do this.

What can people do to ______ __________ ____________ ?

Level C--Exercise and good health

________ _____________ ________ ______________ enough. ________ _________ _____ car ___ _________ . They ________ _______ __________ _______ ______ shopping. They _______ _____ ____________ ___ ____ _____ stairs. _____ __________ , ________ usually sit _____ _________ _____ _________ ____________ _____ _______ . At home, ________ _______ ________ ___________ _______ .

Doctors _______ scientists _______ ________ exercise _____ _________ _____ _______ _________. It's also good ______ _______ ___________ , _______ blood, _______ bones and _______ ________ . ________ _______ ___________ are __________ and they _______ __________ . Experts _____ _______ ___________ _______ ___________ ______ _____ is good _____ ________ . But _______ ______ ___________ of Americans do this.

_______ _______ people _____ to _______ ___________ exercise?

Multi-level dictation, cont'd. . .

Level D--Exercise and good health

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ . ____
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ . ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ ____ . ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ . ____ ____ , ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ . ____ ____ ,
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ .

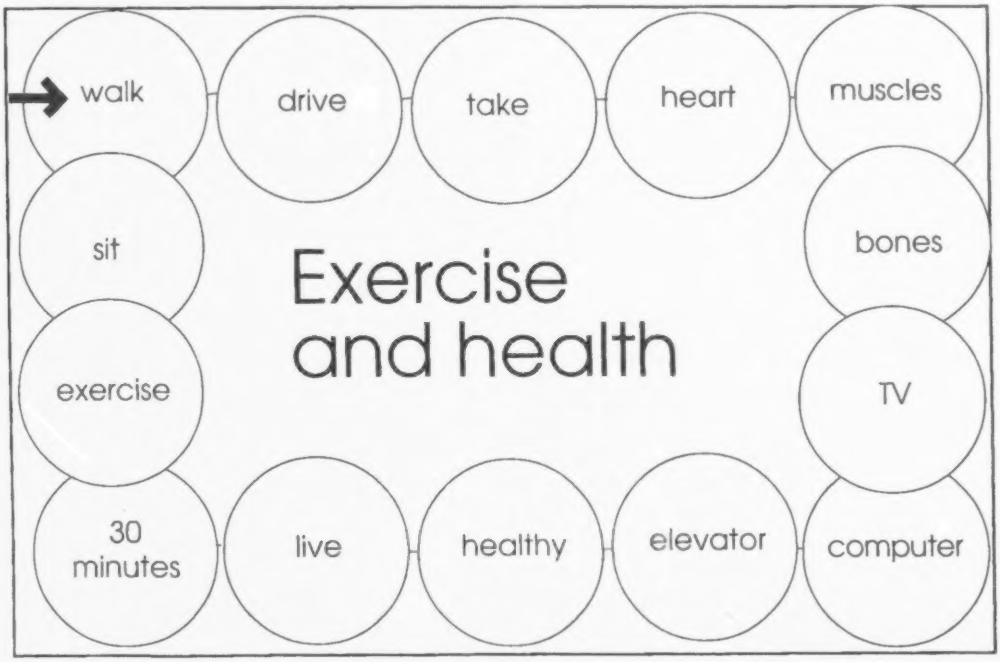
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ ____ ____ . ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
____ , ____ ____ , ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ .
____ ____ ____ are ____ and they ____ ____ ____ .
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ ____ . ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
____ ____ ____ .

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____?

Level E--Exercise and good health

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

Vocabulary board game


walk
drive
take
heart
muscles
sit
bones
Exercise and health
exercise
TV
30 minutes
live
healthy
elevator
computer

Here's a fun and easy speaking activity to review and practice the vocabulary from this reading passage. Students take turns rolling a die (or spinning for a number). They move a marker piece that many spaces, and then say a sentence using the word they landed on.

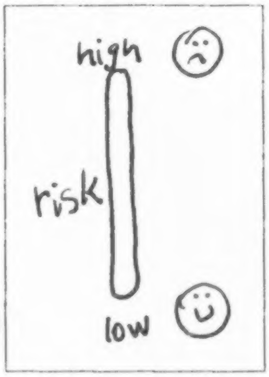
They can use sentences they remember from the story, or they can make up new sentences. Once these words have been practiced, they can play again but this time ask a question with the word you land on.

(This activity is based on an idea called "GRIDIT" by Eileen Schwartz.)

Vocabulary activity:
Exercise and your health

Many health problems are linked to exercise. Here are some of them:

- osteoporosis (weak bones)
- diabetes (blood sugar problems)
- heart attack, heart disease
- high cholesterol (blood fat)
- cancer
- being overweight, obesity
- sleeping problems
- anxiety and depression
- stress
- high blood pressure
- memory problems
- weak muscles
- arthritis (painful joints)
- shorter lifespan



What is risk?

Risk is something that is dangerous for you. If your risk is high, it is more dangerous. If your risk is low, you are safer.

If you exercise, your risk of some health problems decreases (goes down). That is good for you. That means maybe you won't get these health problems.

If you don't exercise, your risk of some health problems increases (goes up). That is not good for you. That means maybe you will get some health problems.

Example:
If you exercise, your risk of osteoporosis will decrease.
If you *don't* exercise, your risk of osteoporosis will increase.

Level A

For beginning level students, make this a listening exercise. Have them write "increase" and "decrease" on the top of a sheet of paper. Then write numbers 1 through 10 down the left side of the page. Say ten sentences aloud using these examples, and have the students listen and write a checkmark under the correct answer. For example, "If you exercise, your risk of high blood pressure will ____" (Students check "decrease.") If this is confusing to them, draw a smiling face for risk decreasing and a frowning face for risk increasing.

Level B

For intermediate students, make this a writing exercise. They should write 3 sentences about why exercise is good for you, and 3 sentences about why not exercising is bad for you. They can use the examples above as a model.

When their sentences have been checked, have the students do a dictation in pairs. One student reads his or her sentence and the other student writes.

Level C

For advanced students, you can do this exercise as a speaking activity. Have each student choose a health condition and describe what happens when you exercise. (i.e., "If you exercise, your risk of heart attack will decrease.") When everyone has tried this, then repeat the activity again but describe what happens when you *don't* exercise.

There is more information about these issues on the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/cdc.html. Look for their recommendations about "Physical activity."

Great stuff in HOE's back issues!

Hands-on English has all of our back issues available (some of the older ones as reprints). That's going on 12 years of useful teaching materials! You can order these for $7 each; order 10 or more and get them for $6 each. See a detailed description of all the back issues on our website at: www.handsonenglish.com/backissues.html

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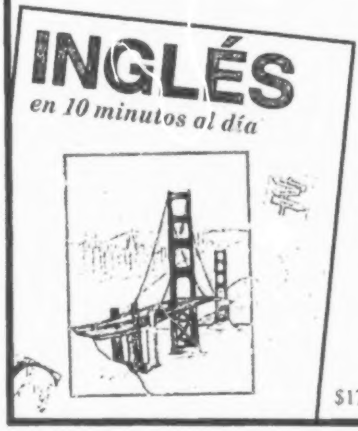

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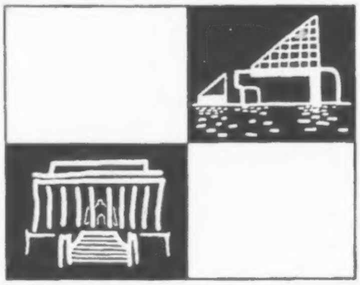

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Are you focussing on reading skills with your students? If so, you might like to try the **newspaper** scanning activity in Vol. 11, No. 4. That same issue also has a crossword puzzle all about newspapers.

To helps students gain **dictionary** skills, there is a dictionary scavenger hunt and puzzle in Vol. 10, No. 5. Similar dictionary activities also appeared in earlier issues, such as Vol. 2, No. 2 and Vol. 3, No. 3.

In our opinion the most useful skill of all is getting to know the **library**. See Vol. 9, No. 3 for a crossword puzzle about public libraries, and a suggestion to send your students on a treasure hunt to an actual library.

Minigrants available

Our annual Minigrants program is getting into gear—by the end of January we'll be mailing out application packets to those who've requested them. The application materials can also be found on our website.

These small grants are intended to support a special teaching project. The deadline for applying is June 30th. Please contact *Hands-on English* for further information.

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Volume 12, Number 6 March/April 2003

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Ambassadors

Once again we go to press not quite sure what the future will bring on the international scene, and there is certainly a lot of anxiety in the air. One thing has always been true, and will continue to be true no matter what—as ESL teachers and tutors we are good will ambassadors, making the world a better place one handshake at a time. I have been playing this role all of my life, and I know of no one who does this better than ESL teachers. Our job now is to continue doing what we do well, as it's more important than ever.

Web activities

Speaking of current events, we were fortunate that shortly after the space shuttle Columbia disaster, Jill Kramer sent us a lesson about the tragedy that she had prepared for her students. We posted this on our website (see the link there to 'Current events') and many teachers who saw it appreciated having this timely material for class discussion.

If you would also like to share a current events lesson with our readers, we'd be delighted! If appropriate, we'll post it on our website so that teachers can access it without delay.

By the way, if you're afraid you might miss something that gets added to our website, please feel free to sign up for our 'Update service.' We'll send you an email message, if and when new material is available.

What's in this issue

We are bringing you one of our well-loved multi-level dictations, this time about a holiday that doesn't usually get much press—Arbor Day. Planting a tree is an act of optimism and a way to connect to the future. It also connects you (via the roots) to a place. The several different dimensions of this might be interesting to discuss with your students. Many thanks to Board member Linda Phipps for suggesting this lesson and for providing her input.

Our puzzle this time is on the task-oriented topic of "Learning English," and along with the interview activity on page 9, this should give your students a chance to discuss their learning process and to consider useful language learning strategies. One aspect that may come out of this exercise is that different students do learn in different ways—what works for one student may not be useful for others. It's also possible that through interviewing each other students may discover promising approaches to learning that they hadn't tried before.

Hands-on English rarely brings you information about computer software. This is not because we don't love computers (your editor is part geek, in fact!). But we know that any work with software is extremely time-consuming, and most of our readers have more urgent needs. This issue is an exception however. Reader Stephanie Thomas sent us a description of her very nifty system for producing her own illustrated worksheets with clip art on disk (see page 14). We think this might inspire some innovative, personalized lessons of your own.

Happy teaching! —the Editor.

Hands-on
English

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English has more on the Web! You can find us at: www.handsonenglish.com

You'll find **current events activities** ready to use, a detailed index of all our back issues, a calendar of ESL events and more useful stuff!

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Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

Advertising

Only three percent of our income comes from advertising. Our editorial decisions are independent.

About our Mini-grants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

Editor Anna Silliman looks forward to hearing from you! Our best teaching ideas come from our readers.

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12-6

Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Space shuttle Columbia

Shortly after the space shuttle disaster last month, Jill Kramer sent us a lesson she'd prepared for her students about the Columbia. We posted it immediately on our website so that teachers could discuss this even with lower level students. Many teachers contacted us to say it was a great lesson! This was one interesting response:

"Just wanted to thank you for posting the activity about the shuttle. I did use it with my ESL class. They were very interested in the topic. It was a nice way to get into it.

"It just so happens that this week the International Space Station has been visible at night over our area (Oregon) and several of the students have been able to observe it. The students had lots of questions and I brought in some books from the library about the space program (lower reading levels). Some students volunteered to take a book home to read and make a brief report to the class.

"Most of the students feel the program should continue."

Thanks again,

—**Mary Ann Phillips**, ESL instructor
Mejorando el Futuro
Even Start Family Literacy Program
Cornelius, OR

Reader remarks

"Hi, from a long-time subscriber. . .the surprise in my mailbox every few weeks that is HOE always makes my day!! It means I can relax the highgear lesson planning at some point soon. . .and let my class flow into something fresh that we all need and can have fun with. . .thanks many times over. . ."

—**Kathy Long**
Rochester, NY

Need an index to HOE?

Many of our longtime subscribers already know this, but recently we've had several inquiries about an index. There is a complete index to all our issues on our website. It is a PDF file, which you can download to your computer and search by keyword. Go to our website at: www.handsonenglish.com and click on the link for the "Long index."

Ideas for drop-in center

This letter came to us in response to Gina Bivings, who in our last issue described the challenge of providing help to ESL students on an irregular or short-term basis.

"Dear Gina,

"I teach in a community college in Seattle and we have the same "open enrollment" challenge. I have used the great newspaper, *Easy English News*, which the students really like. It has less war and violence and is more geared to living in the U.S. It also deals with adult issues and information. For orders call 1-888-296-1090 or visit www.elizabethclaire.com

"I think collecting ideas from the students and going with their interests is a smart way to teach. Read if you haven't already Elsa Auerbach's book, *Making Meaning Making Change* [Delta Systems, www.delta-systems.com]. She also has many good ideas for working with ESL adults."

—**Kathleen Rathbun**, Evening Coordinator, South Seattle Community College

New Advisory Board member

As you may know, *Hands-on English* has an enthusiastic bunch of advisors to help poke us along in the right direction. We are welcoming a new addition to this group—**Magali Duignan**, long-time HOE subscriber and Associate Professor of English at Augusta State University in Georgia. In addition to her work at ASU, Magali also teaches ESOL for adults at her church. She has already contributed articles to *Hands-on English* in the past, and we look forward to her creative input in the future!

Magali came here from Brazil 19 years ago and recently became an American citizen. Because so many of the students our readers work with are on that same road, this experience will add some necessary depth to our Board, and to *Hands-on English* as well. Thank you, Magali, and welcome!

—the Editor

Hints & tips

A human answering machine

In our November/December issue (Vol. 12, No. 4) we brought you a dictation about answering machines called "A recorded message" to give students an introduction to this sometimes difficult aspect of daily life. We received a letter by email about a very interesting teaching technique to help students prepare to talk with machines!

"My students were part of a group invited to the local museum's current blockbuster exhibition. Entry normally costs $15 so getting in free was a good deal. They had to RSVP and I knew this would mean getting an answering machine. The teachable moment arose—I was the answering machine. The 'machine' geared its responses to the student and everyone got a chance to practice. Some students answered more questions than the machine asked so we worked on this, too. Then we had a discussion session about answering machines.

"This answering machine gave a series of choices, as answering machines typically do. So it said, 'If you are calling for the Feb 5 event, press 1, if you are calling for the Feb 10 event, press 2,' etc., etc. It could also say, 'If you are interested in concerts, press 1, if you are interested in dance performances, press 2,' etc. Or it could say 'If you are interested in children's events, press .....' One's imagination is the limit.

"Once the students had 'pressed' a number (which they had to say aloud), the machine gave a new set of options. Once the option was narrowed down, the machine required them to give their name, number of people attending the event, as well as day, time and phone number. Some people gave too much information (address, for example) so the machine required them to do it over. On the whole, though, it was a kind-hearted machine!

"At the end of the class I reminded them about this exhibit and it was clear that those who'd played "answering machine" felt a lot more confident about this than did the latecomers who'd not had a chance to do this activity. Playing answering machine was fun, funny and useful.

—**Ellen Nemhauser**, Atlanta, GA

Fables for retelling

Linda Phipps reported that she likes using *Aesop's Fables* with her students. A set of 48 story cards for these is available from Pro Lingua Associates. These have a picture on one side and a brief fable on the other. They are suitable for intermediate level and above.

Here is Linda's method: First, the class reads a fable together and discusses the moral of the story. They brainstorm some key words for the story and write these on the board. Several students practice retelling the story, using the key words to help.

Once everyone understands the retelling process, she has the students divide into small groups. For example, a class of 9 would form 3 small groups of 3 students each. In each group, the students read and discuss one fable together. They decide on some key words, then they each practice retelling the story.

After all the students are comfortable with their fable, the groups split up and form new groups. For example, the students who read Fable A will now join three separate groups.

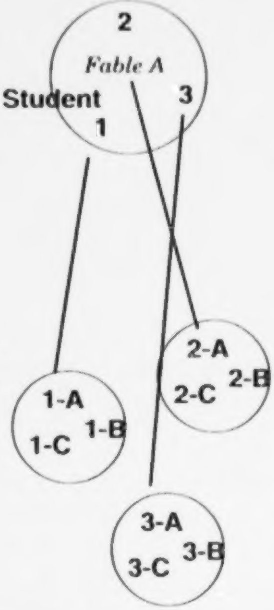
Each student comes to his new group with a different story to tell, which he practiced telling in his previous group. Each student will now tell his story, which none of the others has yet heard, and explain the moral.

Why it works—Careful, structured retelling is excellent practice for ESL students. The retelling never gets tedious, though, when the listeners haven't heard it before.

You can use this same technique with beginning students, using material that is suitable for them. For example, the students could tell a story based on a picture sequence or a photograph.

Find out more about the Aesop's Fables and other story cards at:
www.ProLinguaAssociates.com

First three students practice one fable together:



Then they each move to a new group. The new groups are made up of representatives for each fable. Now each student will re-tell their story to a new audience.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

At Work in the U.S.

A different kind of workplace text.

At Work in the U.S., Readings and Language for Job Success by Ellen Vacco and Paula Jablon (New Readers Press 2003). 143pp. ISBN 1-56420-393-X. A Teacher's Guide and audio CD are also available.

Many workplace texts that we've seen seem to present bits and pieces of information and structure, with no extended reading passages or coherent story. For that matter, beginning level ESL books in general don't have enough stories. This new textbook fills that need, by providing a substantial story about an immigrant worker in every chapter.

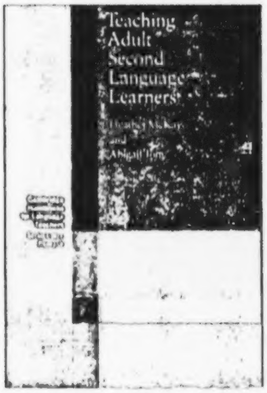
These stories are simple but detailed, with content about both work concerns and personal concerns. The language level is low enough for what we would call high beginners; that is, not for absolute beginners but for those who already speak, read and understand some English.

The topics are similar to those you'll see in other workplace texts. For example, filling out forms, learning about schedules, understanding your paycheck, preventing accidents, getting a performance review, among other things. But in each case, this material raises issues that might be of concern to your students. What do you do if there's a mistake on your pay stub? What happens if you are sick but have no sick days? What if you don't get along with your supervisor?

The students can discuss and consider these questions in the context of the story. Just as in real life though, many questions don't have easy answers and there will be a number of different ways to look at a problem. We think it is that open-ended aspect which makes this book useful and interesting.

The main benefit of the language activities in the book will be vocabulary aquisition, which is most probably what students in the workplace need. There are some structure exercises too (past tense verbs, question forms), but most of the activities are about content. The Teacher's Guide is a must have, for its photocopiable worksheets with additional problems for students to solve. For example, interpreting a work schedule or calculating overtime on a paycheck, as well as more vocabulary practice.

This book is practical, yet it also has more thoughtful content than most other books for work-related learning.


Teaching Adult Second Language Learners

Heather McKay and Abigail Tom

A teacher resource and idea book.

Teaching Adult Second Language Learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom (Cambridge University Press 1999). 234pp. ISBN 0-521-64990-0.

You already know one of the authors of this book as "Dear Abbie" in her regular *Hands-on English* column. So you can easily guess that this book is full of useful, practical ideas for everyday teaching.

Open the book anywhere and you'll find an idea you could use in your class. The main section of the book, "Theme-Based Units" is divided into common subject areas that you might cover, particularly with beginning and intermediate students. These themes are personal information, family, community, food, clothing, housing, health, work and money. There are 10 or 12 activities for each of these themes, including dictations, information gap activities, interviews, games, role-play activities, pair and group work, and discussion activities.

For example, in the Food section there is a 'refrigerator dictation' to practice directions and food vocabulary—i.e., "Put the apples on the bottom shelf on the right." The students listen to a description of what's in a refrigerator and draw the contents. They can follow up by describing their own refrigerators for others to draw.

The activities are specifically designed to help teach the language and skills the students need for survival. At the same time they are intriguing, interesting to solve and personal, making the classroom experience a pleasure. This kind of balance between practical and fun is hard to find and it is the special quality in the work of these master teachers.

Multi-level dictation:
Arbor Day

Students are always interested in learning about our holidays and special events. This is one that is frequently overlooked, but is interesting to talk about.

Ask the students if they have a day to celebrate tree planting in their home country. If so, have them tell you something about this. Read and discuss the story below about the U.S. holiday. It's traditional for public officials to participate in a tree-planting ceremony on this day. If possible, bring in a news story from a past Arbor Day to show the students.

Preparation for dictation

Make a copy of the worksheets (A, B, C and D) on the next two pages. Cut apart the levels, enlarge each one (to make the spaces easier to write in), then make copies for your students. Be sure to make extra copies, as students often like to try this activity more than once at different levels.

Have each student select the level they want to try. Read the passage aloud at natural speed, pausing between sentences to give the students time to write. You can repeat the passage as many times as the students wish.

When your students are finished writing the dictation, have them help each other to make corrections. Level A students can provide information for Level B, C, D, and E students, because they have a more complete text!

Further information

You can go to the Arbor Day Foundation's website to find out more about trees. There is a "Tree Guide" there and a list of the benefits of trees. See www.arborday.org

Arbor Day

Many countries have a festival for tree planting. For example, there is a day like this in Australia, Japan, Israel, Korea, Yugoslavia and India. In the U.S., the day to celebrate planting trees is called 'Arbor Day.'

National Arbor Day is on the last Friday in April. In some states, they have this holiday at a different time. On this day, many people will plant a tree. Children in school will have a celebration about trees. The newspaper will have a story about tree planting.

Arbor Day started in Nebraska. The settlers who came there needed trees for building and for fuel. They also needed trees for shade and for shelter from the wind.

Many holidays are about the past. This holiday is about the future.

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 13 sentences (126 words) long.

Key words: *festival, holiday, celebrate, celebration, tree planting, future.*

Other: *building, fuel, shade, shelter.*

Discussion

1. Have you ever planted a tree? Where? Is the tree still there?
2. How long does it take for a tree to grow large?
3. Do we need trees today? Why?
4. Do you know what kind of trees grow in your city?
5. Tell a story about a tree in your life.

Writing

You are the mayor of this city. You will be speaking to some children on Arbor Day.
Write a short speech to tell them something about this holiday.
Then, read your speech to the class.

Level A—Arbor Day

Many __________ have a festival for ______ planting. For example, there is a _____ like this in Australia, Japan, Israel, _________ , Yugoslavia and India. In the ______ , the day to celebrate planting trees is called 'Arbor _______ .'

National _________ Day is on the last _________ in April. In some states, they have this ___________ at a different time. On this day, many _________ will plant a tree. __________ in school will have a celebration about ________ . The newspaper will have a story about tree ____________ .

Arbor Day started ____ Nebraska. The settlers who came there needed _______ for building and for fuel. They also needed ________ for shade and for shelter from the _______ .

Many ___________ are about the past. This ___________ is about the future.

Level B—Arbor Day

__________ countries _________ _____ festival for tree planting. For example, _______ _____ ____ _______ like this in Australia, _________ , Israel, Korea, Yugoslavia and _________ . In the U.S., _____ ________ _____ celebrate planting trees is called '_________ _________ .'

National Arbor Day is on ______ __________ ___________ _____ April. In some states, _______ _________ this _______ ____ at a different time. ______ _________ ________ , many people ______ ________ _____ _______ . Children _____ _________ will _______ ____ celebration ________ _________ . The newspaper ______ _________ _____ _______ about tree planting.

Arbor Day __________ _____ Nebraska. The settlers who came there ___________ _______ _____ building and ______ fuel. They also _________ ______ _____ shade and _____ shelter _______ _______ wind.

__________ ______________ are about _____ past. ________ __________ is about _____ future.

Level C—Arbor Day

__________ _____________ _________ a festival _____ ________ ____________ . For example, ________ ____ ____ ______ ______ _______ in ____________ , Japan, Israel, Korea, _______________ and India. _____ ______ _______ , the day to celebrate _________ ______ ___ __________ 'Arbor Day.'

National Arbor Day ____ _____ ______ _________ ___________ ___ _______. In some _______ , _______ ________ ______ ___________ at a different _______ . On this day, ________ __________ ______ _________ a ______ . ____________ ______ _________ will have ____ ___________ _______ ________ _______ . The newspaper will ________ ___ _________ _________ ______ ____________ .

_________ _______ ____________ ___ Nebraska. The settlers ______ _________ ______ needed trees _____ ____________ ______ _____ ________ . They also needed trees _____ __________ and _____ __________ from the wind.

Many holidays are ________ ______ _________. This holiday is ________ ______ __________.

Level C—Arbor Day

______ ________ ______ ___ ________ _____ ______
______ . _____ ________ , _____ ___ ___ _____ _____ _____
___ ___________ , _______ , _________ , ________ , __________ ______
____ . ____ _____ ______ , _____ ____ ____ ________ ________
_____ ___ _______ ‘ _______ _______ .’

______ _____ ____ ____ _____ _____ ______ ______ ______ ___
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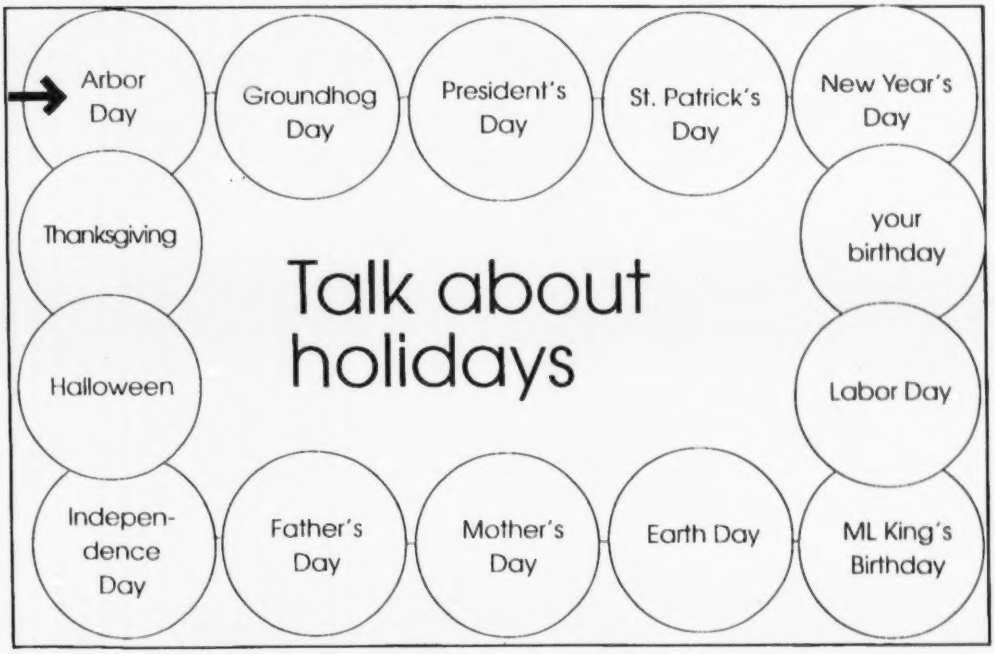
___ ______ _____ _______ .

Level E—Arbor Day

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

Vocabulary board game


Arbor Day
Groundhog Day
President's Day
St. Patrick's Day
New Year's Day
your birthday
Labor Day
ML King's Birthday
Earth Day
Mother's Day
Father's Day
Independence Day
Halloween
Thanksgiving
Talk about holidays

To play this game, students take turns rolling a die (or spinning for a number). They move a marker piece that many spaces, and then ask a question about the holiday they landed on. Another student gives the answer. They should repeat the game several times:

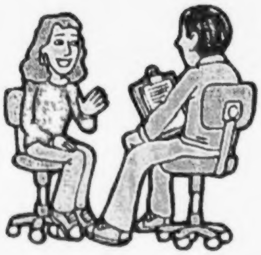
1. Ask a question (who, what, when, where, why?) about the holiday.

2. Make a statement about the holiday.

3. Add some more holidays to the game board, and play 1 & 2 again.

This is based on an idea called "GRIDIT" by Eileen Schwartz.)

Conversation activity:
Interview about learning English



Here is an interview activity to get your students brainstorming and talking about the process of learning English. (It's a good introduction to the puzzle on the next page.)

One-question interview

Assign each student one question, or have them each choose one. Explain that their task is to get as many ideas as they can from the other students in the class. To do this, they will survey each of the other students. They should take a note on each response.

For example, one student will take the question "How do you remember new words?" He or she will ask the other students, one at a time, for some advice about this. Write down the advice.

When the students are all finished with their interviews, ask them to give a report to the class about what they learned. This will provide another opportunity to discuss learning strategies.

Here are twelve questions for your students to use in their survey. Each student takes one question. If you have more than 12 students, add more questions or divide the class into separate groups.

How do you remember new words?

What kind of dictionary do you prefer? Why?

Do you think watching TV helps your English? Why or why not?

How can I improve my pronunciation?

How many years does it take to learn a language very well?

How can I get more practice speaking English?

I can read English well but when Americans speak I can't understand them. What can I do?

How much time do you spend doing homework?

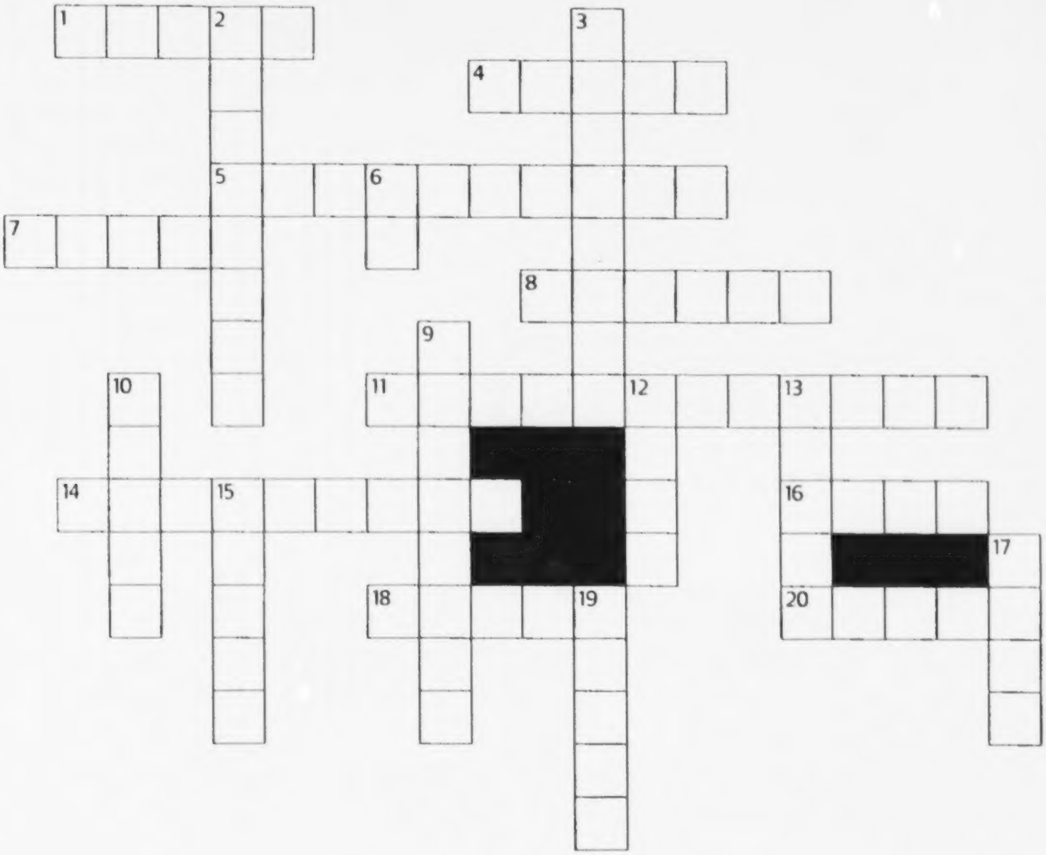
How can I improve my writing?

It's not easy to read in English. How can I improve my reading?

I feel embarrassed when I speak English. What can I do?

My brother gave me a tape recorder. How can I use this to improve my English?

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Learning English



Word list

book
class
conversation
dictionary
homework
listen
magazine
newspaper
radio
read
speak
story
students
study
tape
tutor
TV
words
write
years

To the instructor:

You may want to introduce this topic first with the interview activity on page 9.

This puzzle is about the basic classroom language learning process. You can offer your students the choice to try Level A or Level B. Bring extra copies, so the students can also try the other level when they are done.

If the students have difficulty with the puzzle, you can give them the word list to work from for extra help. Otherwise, it might be better to have them try it without the list.

More like this

We had another puzzle called "Language learning" in Vol.5, No. 5 (Jan/Feb 1996). This one was a little more difficult in level. In that same issue was a dictation and writing exercise to practice the same vocabulary.

We also had a very interesting multi-level dictation called "How to learn English" in Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sept/Oct 1999). This provides an opportunity for your students to talk about learning strategies, and we heard that it stimulated some good discussions.

Another lesson that relates to language and learning strategies is "About reading" in Vol.7, No. 1 (May/June 1997), a multi-level crossword puzzle and a word search activity.

Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. Sorry, I can't talk to you now. I have to go to my English ________. It starts at 4:00.
4. I studied English for 3 ________ in my country.
5. Sudent 1: “I don't know this word.” Student 2: “I don't know it either. Let's look it up in the ________.”
7. The teacher asked us to ________ in a journal for 10 minutes every day.
8. “Shh. Please be quiet. I'm trying to ________ to the news!”
11. Twice a week I meet with an American friend to practice English ________. We enjoy talking about many things.
14. Jorge: “I'm looking for a used car to buy.” Simon: “Did you look in today's ________?” Jorge: “Not yet.”
16. I made a ________ of our English class today so I can listen to it again at home.
18. When I learn new English ________, I write them down in my notebook.
20. When I am driving my car, I like to listen to the ________.

Down clues

2. There are 21 ________ in my English class.
3. While you are waiting in the doctor's office, you can read a ________ about sports, or food, or health.
6. Sara: “What did you do last night?” Lin: “I stayed home and watched ________.”
9. Every evening I spend about 30 minutes doing my ________.
10. Student 1: “How many languages do you ________?” Student 2: “Two languages, and a little bit of English.”
12. Teacher: “Han, please ________ your story to the class.”
13. When I first came to the U.S., I had a ________ to help me with my English. Now I study English at school.
15. Peter: “I wrote a ________ about my life. Would you like to read it?” Maria: “Sure!”
17. Teacher: “Please open your ________ to page 57.”
19. If you want to ________ English at the ABC school, you have to take a test first.

Level B (harder)

Across clues

1. This word means a group of students who work with one teacher.
4. How many ________ do you need to study, to learn English very well?
5. Sometimes this kind of book has words in two languages.
7. This word means to put your ideas on paper.
8. You do this with your ears.
11. Lisa and Julia are talking about a wedding they attended last week. They are having a ________.
14. You can read this to find out what's going on in your city and in the world.
16. If you have one of these, you can listen to the same thing many times.
18. Every week I learn new vocabulary ________.
20. An electronic device for listening to music and news broadcasts.

Down clues

2. People who are working hard to learn something are called ________.
3. This is something to read with stories and many pictures. You can buy it in a grocery store or a book store.
6. An electronic device for listening and watching at the same time.
9. “Can you help me with my ________?” “Okay, let me see your assignment.”
10. ______ means to say something.
12. You can do this with a book, newspaper, magazine or letter.
13. A person who helps you learn something, usually outside of class.
15. Yesterday the teacher told us a funny ______. Then we had to tell the same thing to another student.
17. You can borrow this from the library and read it at home.
19. “What are your plans for the future?” “After I learn English very well, I want to ______ computer science.”

Grammar grab-bag:

"Put the gift next to the birthday cake"

Practice with prepositions

Here's a grammar activity for beginning level students to practice some of the prepositions of place, such as *on, next to, under, behind, in front of, in.*

To help the students get started, show them the example picture below. Ask, what is wrong with this picture? For example, the cake is on the floor! This will help them practice the vocabulary before they do the activity.

Next, have the students sit in pairs. Give one student the blank picture to draw on, and give the other student one of the instruction sheets. As one student dictates, the other student draws. Now, the students switch roles, using a different set of instructions.

When both students have drawn a picture and checked it for accuracy, have them write some sentences to describe their pictures. The students can correct each others' writing by checking on the original instruction sheet.

To follow up, students can try another set of instructions, or they can invent their own instructions as they repeat the activity.

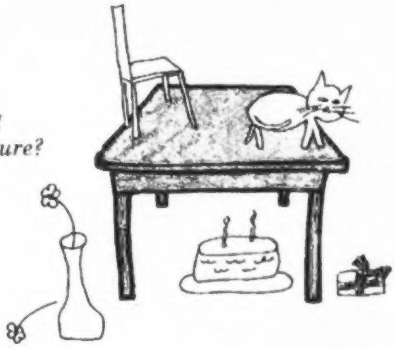
Why it works—this activity involves cooperation, reading, listening, speaking and writing, as well as a little fun.

Vocabulary

table, chair, cake, cat, vase, flower, gift.

on, next to, in, under, behind, in front of.

What's wrong with this picture?



Instructions—Student A

(Read this to your partner.)

Put a birthday cake on the table.
Put a small gift next to the cake.
Put a chair next to the table.
Put a cat under the table.
Put a vase behind the cake.
Put a flower in the vase.
Put a large gift on the floor, in front of the table.

Instructions—Student B

(Read this to your partner.)

Put a chair on the right side of the table.
Put another chair on the left side of the table.
Put a cat under one chair.
Put a small gift on the other chair.
Put a vase on the table.
Put two flowers in the vase.
Put a birthday cake next to the vase.

Here are some additional instructions, in case your students want to try the activity again.

Instructions—Student A

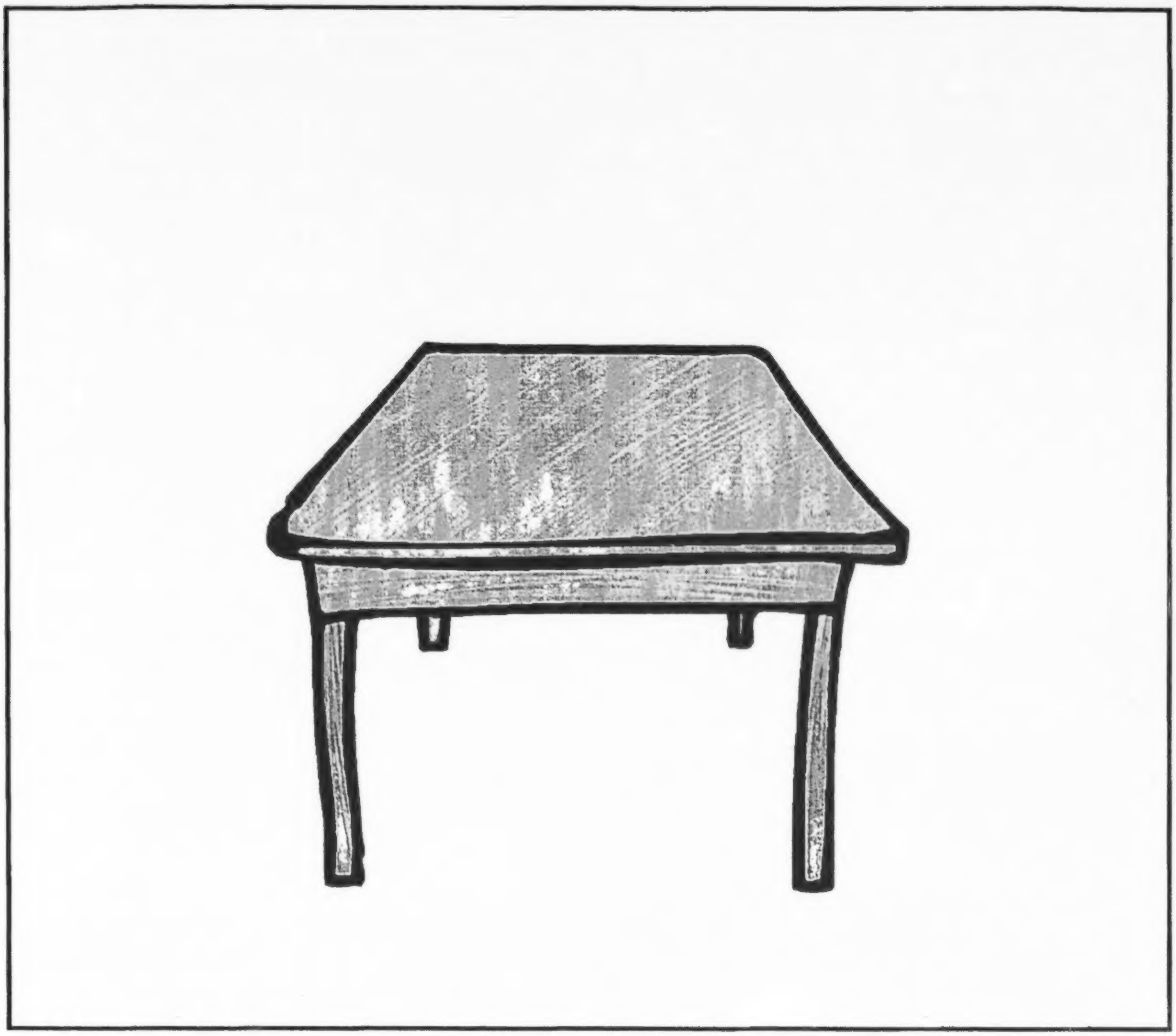
(Read this to your partner.)

Put a book on the table.
Put a cat next to the book.
Put a vase on the book.
Put 3 flowers in the vase.
Put a chair next to the table.
Put a small gift under the chair.

Instructions—Student B

(Read this to your partner.)

Put a chair in front of the table.
Put a large gift on the chair.
Put a cat next to the table.
Put a cake on the table.
Put a flower next to the cake.
Put a vase under the table.



1. Listen to your partner. Draw the pictures in the correct places.

2. Explain your picture to your partner. Is it correct?

3. Write about your picture.

4. Check your writing with your partner.

Tools & techniques:
Clipart for teacher-made lessons

*by **Stephanie Thomas**, instructor at Escondido Adult School in Escondido, California.*

Have you ever looked for a handout on a specific theme or language structure but you could not find one anywhere in a book that expressed what you wanted? Ever want to present an idea to the class but you run into a brick wall because you don't have a graphic to illustrate it with? As a Low Beginning ESL instructor, I know better than to try anything new without having lots of pictures to show my class what I mean.

A few years ago, my husband bought me a Christmas present that revolutionized the way I teach ESL. Under the tree, I found a software program called CLICKART, by Broderbund. This program is a package of 8 disks that contain 250,000 clipart images. Now, I have a picture of whatever I want to express.

To make use of these graphic images, I usually import the image into PowerPoint which I use to create handouts and slide presentations. It is easier to combine text and graphics in PowerPoint than in any other program I've tried. After I put the desired image on a slide in PowerPoint, I can enlarge, make smaller, embellish the color or change the image to grayscale. Usually, I then print the slide I've created on plain white paper, then photocopy it onto a transparency at school. It's also possible to print directly onto a transparency with your computer printer if you have the right transparency product. (On the next two pages are a few examples of the handouts I've created.)

A 'class mixer' activity

A 'mixer' is a handout that I give my students with a particular grammar structure that I wish to highlight in class that day. It's so liberating to have the capacity to create the exact mixer I need. Now I can ask, "Do you like apple pie?" without having to pantomime this American desert (impossible to do. . .in past years I tried.) All I do is include a picture of apple pie on my mixer handout. I can create a transparency on any topic. . .Halloween ghosts and goblins, American presidents. . .sports verbs in the present continuous. With 250,000 images to choose from, I'm never without an illustration.

The images are divided into categories such as Animals, Education, Housing, Transportation, etc. In addition, there's a search tool so all you have to do is type in "garden hose," and presto. . .a whole array of garden hose clipart images to choose from. I've been able to target the special vocabulary needs of my students (manicurists, landscapers, housecleaners) like never before. I've had great fun using this tool. I highly recommend it as an indispensible classroom tool for anyone who likes to create his or her own curriculum. It's incredible! I've illustrated songs, worked up animated slide presentations and even created greeting cards. I'm told this program set Santa back a mere $25.00. Money well spent, I assure you.

You can find these clip art programs at computer stores, online software retailers, or contact the company for information.

For Windows users:
ClickArt by Broderbund
Orders: 1-800-395-0277
www.broderbund.com

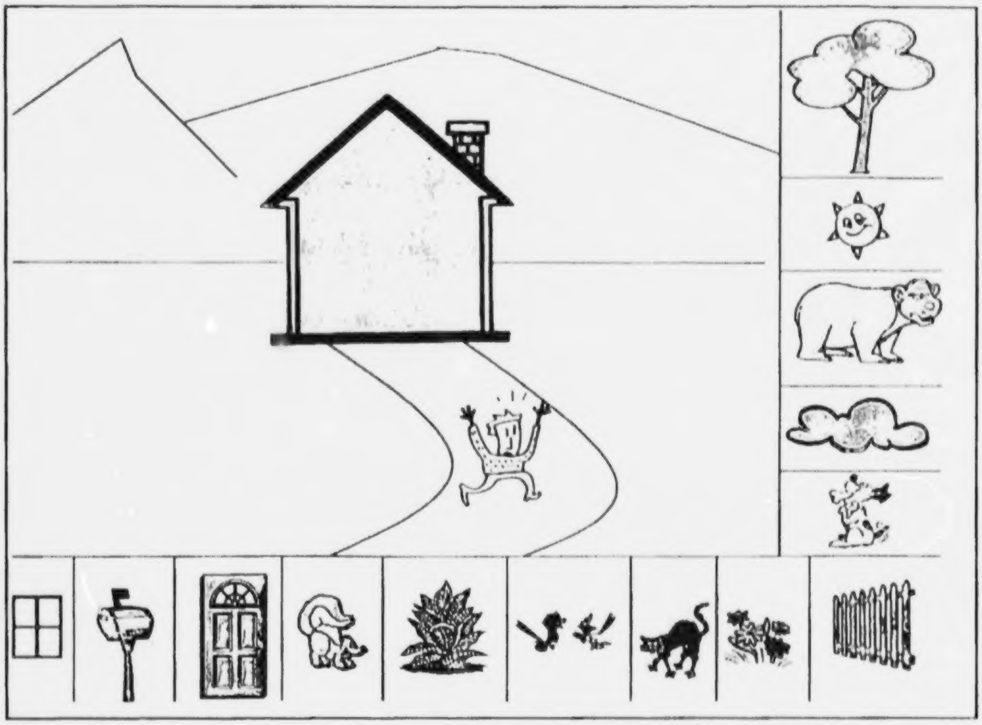
For Macintosh users:
Art Explosion by Nova Development
www.novadevelopment.com

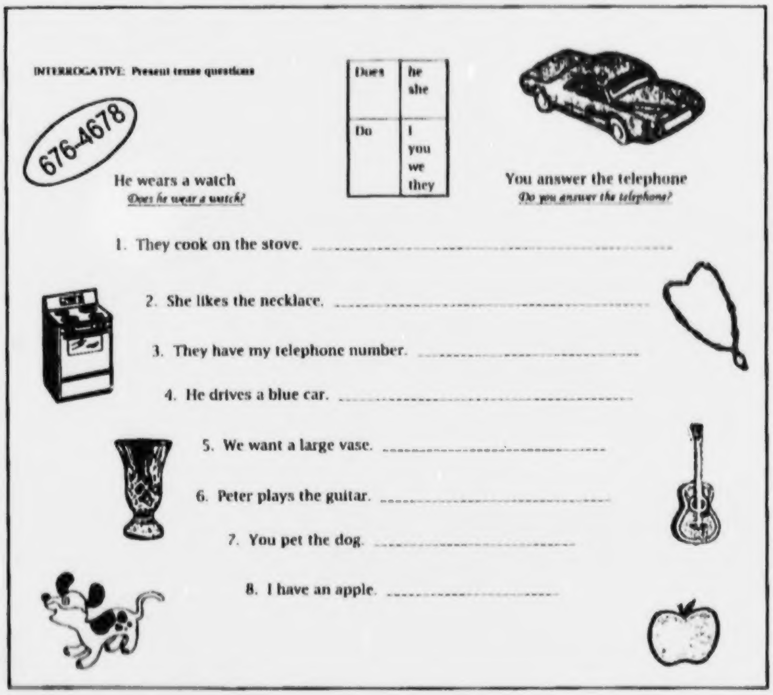
Clip art is also available on the internet. Usually this involves a fee. For example, *Hands-on English* subscribes to ArtToday/Clipart.com for an annual fee in order to find illustrations for some of our articles. This service is found at: www.clipart.com

You can also find free clip art on the Web if you look. Try www.Clipartguide.com as a starting place. Of course, searching for the right image online can be time-consuming, especially if you have a slow connection!

Clipart for teacher-made lessons, cont'd. . .

Here is Stephanie's home-made "house manipulatives" worksheet. Quick, think of three activities your students could do with this!





INTERROGATIVE: Present tense questions

676-4678

He wears a watch

Does he wear a watch?

Does	he she
Do	I you we they

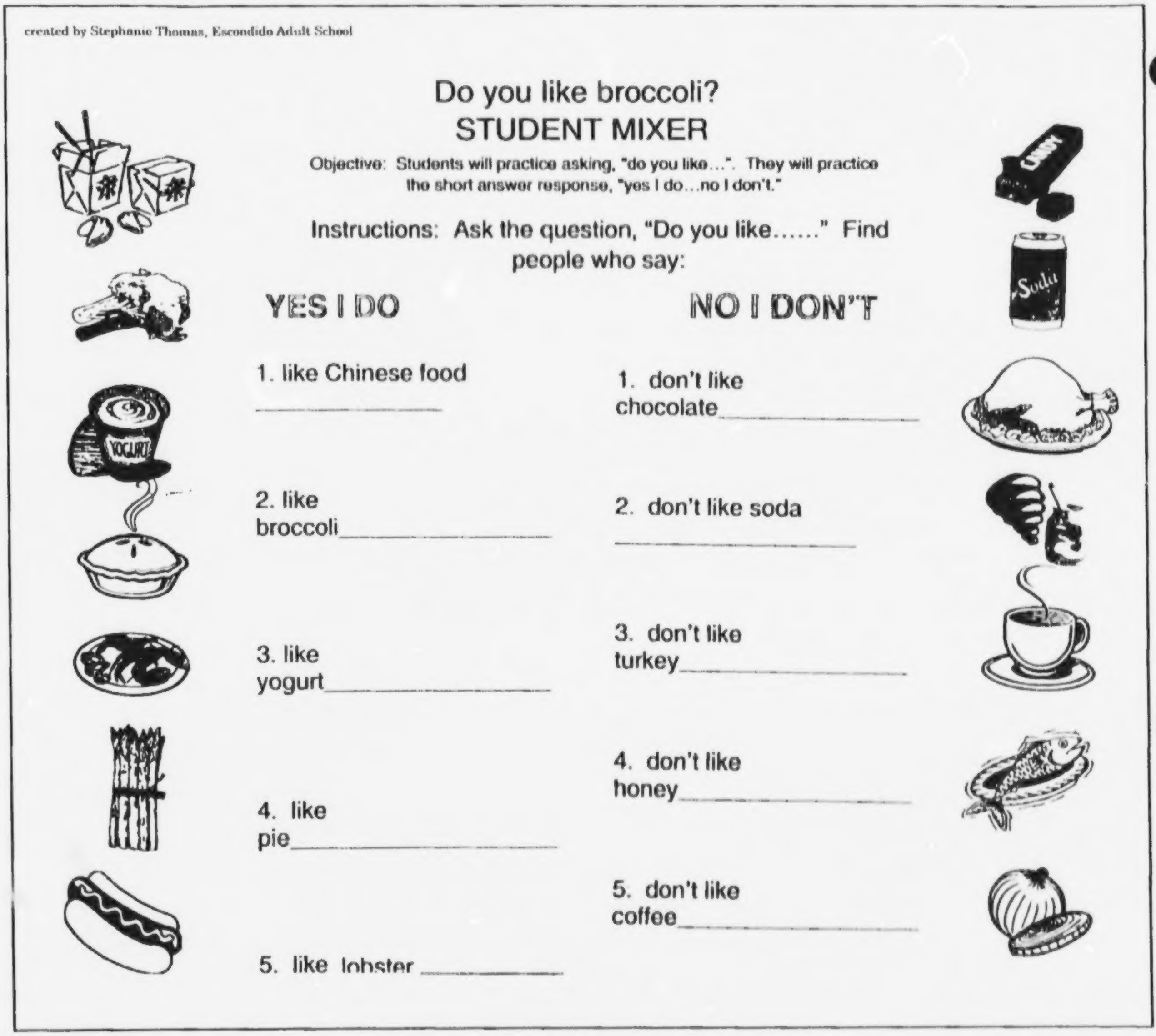
You answer the telephone

Do you answer the telephone?

1. They cook on the stove. ....
2. She likes the necklace. ....
3. They have my telephone number. ....
4. He drives a blue car. ....
5. We want a large vase. ....
6. Peter plays the guitar. ....
7. You pet the dog. ....
8. I have an apple. ....

Here is an example of a grammar practice sheet that Stephanie illustrated with clip art on her computer.

Once you are familiar with the process of searching for the right clip art and placing it on the page, it doesn't take long at all to do.



created by Stephanie Thomas, Escondido Adult School

Do you like broccoli?
STUDENT MIXER

Objective: Students will practice asking, "do you like…". They will practice the short answer response, "yes I do…no I don't."

Instructions: Ask the question, "Do you like……" Find people who say:

YES I DO

1. like Chinese food ______________
2. like broccoli ______________
3. like yogurt ______________
4. like pie ______________
5. like lobster ___________

NO I DON'T

1. don't like chocolate ______________
2. don't like soda ______________
3. don't like turkey ______________
4. don't like honey ______________
5. don't like coffee ______________

Stephanie Thomas explains how she uses "mixer" activities with her students:

I give my students a handout with some questions using the particular grammar structure we are highlighting that day. For example, the structure may be present tense verbs in question format ("Do you like...?" for instance.) If our unit is about food, the mixer contains questions such as, "Do you like hamburgers...do you like cheese....do you like spinach?" Students must roam around the classroom asking one another these questions. When they find a student who answers, "yes I do," they write that student's name on the line. I love mixers because, even though they force students to ask a similar question repetitively, they remain lively, engaging activities. The students are mingling and getting to know one another. Another great reason to use them in class is to emphasize the need to give personal information accurately. Before beginning the activity, I model the questions, "What is your name...How do you spell that, etc." Students must ask these questions as well as the targeted structure questions on the mixer to complete the activity. Mixers force students to spell their names in English again and again for other students. They receive immediate feed back on how clearly they can do this. These skills are valuable survival skills that they pick up along with the targeted grammar structure and vocabulary.

With a disk of clip art, a teacher can create illustrated lessons and practice sheets like this for beginning students.

Can you think of other ways to make use of clip art with your students? Let us know—we'll publish your responses.

—the Editor.

Dear Abbie:
Teaching English in English

—**by Abbie Tom,**
ESL teacher in Durham, North Carolina.

*Do you have a question for Abbie? Please let us know at **Hands-on English** and we'll pass it along to her. Thank you!*

Editor's note

Babel in the classroom: Very often ESL teachers have students from many different countries who speak different languages. Most of the time, the teacher doesn't know these languages. So, I am frequently asked by people who are unfamiliar with ESL/ESOL: How can you teach them English if you don't know their languages? I am quick to explain that this is what our field is all about—we have wonderful techniques and approaches designed to teach English through communication in English, and it really works.

However, there are some cases where the teacher (or tutor) is familiar with the students' language. For example, the teacher may speak Spanish and have a class primarily of Spanish-speaking students. Now the question arises, would it be better, from a language-teaching point of view, to go ahead and make use of Spanish language explanations for the students? After all, it can be hard to explain some things in English, especially to beginners.

We asked regular columnist Abbie Tom to help us out and explain how she feels about this issue.

Abbie responds:

Dear Readers,

Should the instructor teach only in English? Yes!! Here's why:

- Because you're teaching English, first of all. That's why your students come to class. Most adult students speak their first language at home... of course! And that is really important for their children's language development. Many speak their first language at work as well. So English class is often their main opportunity to practice English.
- Some students need to be pushed a bit to use English. They feel shy about speaking the language, yet they have demonstrated by coming to class that they want to learn. It's always easier to use one's native language. By teaching in English, you challenge your students to learn to communicate in English in a safe place, your class.
- To give your students more exposure to English. By always speaking in English, you are "bathing" your students in English. Maybe they don't understand every word and probably they can't use all the language you use, but they're hearing it and understanding most of it.
- To model ways of communicating. When you make every effort to communicate your meaning through gestures, pictures, re-stating, or spelling words, you are modeling for your students ways they can communicate.
- To demonstrate to your students that they CAN learn to use English. Translating everything for them implies that they really aren't capable of learning the language.

You may wonder, how can you do this effectively? It's not easy. It might seem easier to translate for students if you know their language, but they won't learn as much. At best, it gives *you* practice using their language. Consider these tips:

First, monitor your own language. It's up to you to make your language understandable. That doesn't mean saying one word at a time or exaggerating the pronunciation of words. It does mean speaking clearly and more slowly than you would to native speakers. Choose your words carefully. If your students don't understand you, find another way to say it or use gestures or pictures to help out. With beginners, avoid passive voice and very long sentences. Use simpler structures (such as "sit over here, please" rather than "why don't you sit over here" or "would you mind sitting here").

Second, choose content carefully. Think of themes or topics not only in terms of their importance to your students but also in terms of language demands. Health, for example, is a very important topic, but students need a lot of language to study it. Personal information, on the other hand, requires much less. You don't need to teach everything there is to know about a topic. A beginner, for example, needs to learn to provide and ask for name, address, phone number and birthdate. These things alone require a lot of language for a beginner (spelling words, knowing numbers and dates). Higher level students might expand on personal information by reading about identity theft, for example. Common sentence structures can be learned with analysis. A student doesn't have to know all about the past tense to say, "I was born in 1967." She can read a story told in the past without being able to produce it herself.

Finally, don't ask students to do things they're not ready to do in English. For example, don't ask beginners "Tell your partner about your family." Instead, look at an example of a family tree (from a picture dictionary, or make one of your own family), naming family members and relationships. Then have them make their own family tree and tell their partner about it, based on the model they've already practiced. You might put cue sentences or questions on the board before they begin.

At first some of your students may resist your "English only" class. Be persistent and they'll come around. Soon you'll hear them talking to you and to their classmates in English. Then you and the students will know it was worth making the effort. ☛

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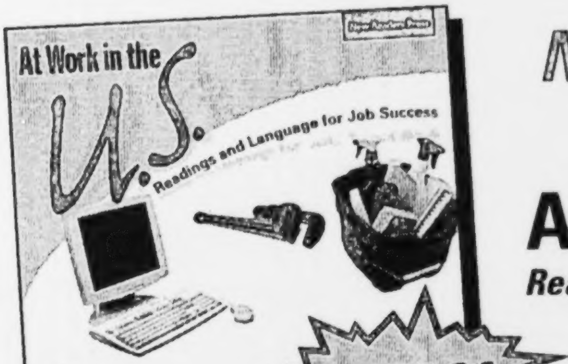

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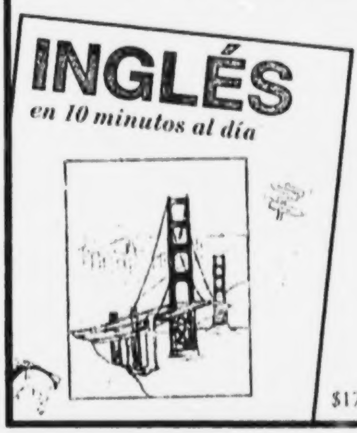

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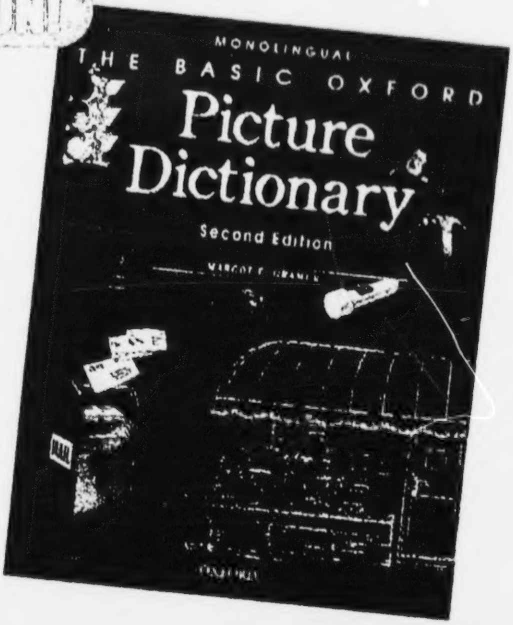

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

April showers bring. . .tax deadlines. We've already had a few calls in our office from readers wanting to order our issue on **taxes**. This was Vol. 10, No. 6 and it includes a multi-level dictation about the good old American tradition of procrastinating on your taxes. That issue also has a reading activity about the process of filing taxes, as well as a multi-level crossword puzzle about basic tax vocabulary.

Another annual event in April is "TV Turnoff Week," which this year will run from April 21–27. See Vol. 11, No. 6 for a reading, discussion and multi-level dictation about this interesting event. If you use this material in your class, remember to change the reference to the start and end dates in the third paragraph of the dictation before photocopying the sheets for your students.

Minigrants available

We are still mailing out application packets to anyone who requests one. The same application materials can also be found on our website.

These small grants are intended to support a special teaching project. The deadline for applying is June 30th. Please contact *Hands-on English* for further information.

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